

J U L Y 1 9 1 4 • 15 C E N T S

AINSLEE'S

THE MAGAZINE THAT ENTERTAINS



**The Late
Mrs. Grundy** *by Edgar Salt*
Marie Van Vorst • Neith Boyce

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Vol. XXXIII. No. 6

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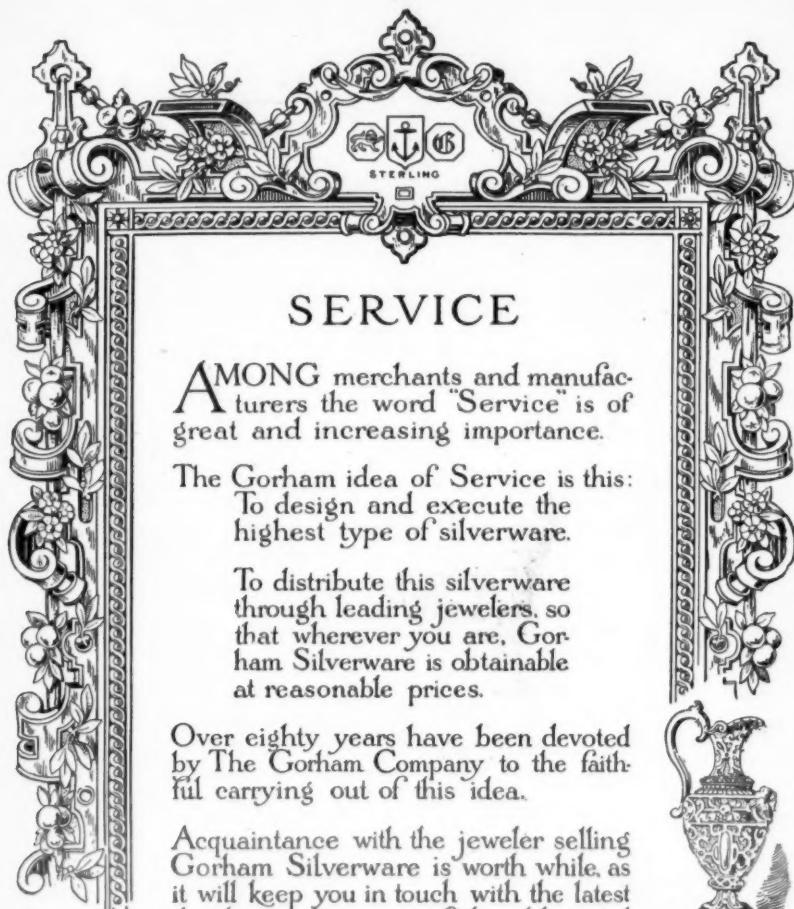
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VOL. XXXIII.

JULY, 1914.

No. 6.



CHAPTER I.

FERDINAND D. LODGE gazed after the disappearing figure of his daughter and shook his head slowly. It was the first time in his life that he had felt the sting of utter defeat. Bettina had taken him up and down the emotional scale from surprise to despair, and as a concluding note had flung at him a bit of childish impertinence—an impertinence that he had almost welcomed, since it had shown her a spoiled girl rather than the hardened young woman her previous demands had revealed. On the whole, she had given him a very bad morning, and now he stood in the library door, which he had opened for her a moment before with so much ceremony, and watched her cross the hall and ascend the stairway.

Coloring and mitigating his indignation was the admiration that the sight of Bettina always awakened in him; the grace and pride of her bearing; the poise of her head—that willful head, with its high pile of red-brown

hair. He hoped to the last that she would turn with a reconciling smile, but she passed from sight without a glance over her shoulder, and, sighing deeply, Ferdinand D. reentered the library and shut himself in with his problem.

Over and above his annoyance with Bettina for crossing his will and outraging his deepest sentiments was another and equally characteristic emotion—chagrin at the overturning of the working formula of his life, the formula that right planning will bring right results. He had built his life on it, and succeeded, and now Bettina had made him doubt it. He knew what thought and love and patience had been lavished on her—how he had given the best in him to rear her a worthy woman; and now, instead of the daughter he had dreamed of, his Bettina was a short-sighted, hardhearted, willful little snob.

Bettina Lodge, born of good American stock on a Texas ranch, the girl who had ridden bucking ponies when she was twelve, who had been the pride

of a rough, hard-riding, deep-swearing lot of cow-punchers, was a snob! She had acquired an English accent, snubbed old friends, laughed at the crudities of American men, and now had crowned these offenses by announcing to her father her intention of marrying Count Hercule Diadoti, a small, hollown-chested, impecunious Italian nobleman.

Ferdinand D. had met the count a year ago, when he had followed Bettina home from Europe, and his first dislike had grown until the very thought of the foreigner's attendance on Bettina was intolerable. To Lodge, the refinement of Diadoti was effeminacy, his courtesy, hypocrisy, his courtship of Bettina rank fortune hunting. In his heart he accused the suave nobleman of every known vice, and suspected him of others not yet discovered by the more virtuous members of the human family.

Until this morning, however, the war over Diadoti had been waged with much courtesy on both sides. Freedom was to F. D. the first essential of happiness, and his daughter had been allowed to exercise her own judgment on all matters that concerned herself. In spite of his aversion to the count, he had never demanded that she give him up entirely. He had tried to show her the folly of such a marriage, but always in calmness and a spirit of fair dealing. It had all been to no end, however; Bettina was determined, and this morning had sought him out and approached the subject in a manner that had shown him the time had come for plain speech and his ultimatum.

"The day you become a countess, every cent I have will be given to the State of Texas for educational purposes. I'll go back to the ranch and forget all about those Arizona mines that have brought things to this pass by making me infernally rich!"

"You've nothing but a silly, pro-

vincial prejudice against Diadoti," she had flared out at him.

"You are wrong, Bettina——"

"You have had your life—why can't I have mine?" she had cut in.

"You can have yours," he had answered calmly, "but you can't expect me to finance an affair that is absolutely opposed to my judgment. If you insist, you must make your own life as I made mine. My father was a lawyer in Virginia; he wanted me to follow in his steps, but I couldn't see it that way——"

"Then why do you expect me——"

"I don't, exactly. You can't say, Bettina, that you haven't had all the freedom a girl could have."

"Yes, in unessential ways; but now, when my whole future life——"

"That's just it—it is your whole future life; that is why I can't consent. If it were a matter of a few weeks or months, I would say nothing, but it's for life. I don't want to see you in bad for life, Betty," a smile breaking over his serious face.

"Oh!" she had returned impatiently. "You talk as if I hadn't thought this thing out, as if I didn't know what would make me happy."

"I'd back you any time for your happiness," he had said gravely, "but this time it is my judgment against yours, and I am heaps older——"

"And prejudiced and unprogressive," she had finished.

"We've said enough," he had returned sharply. "You are twenty-three, and free. I can't dictate to you, even if I wanted to. My money is yours—all of it—for any purpose except to buy a husband." He had walked over to the door and opened it with a ceremony that was the product of his Virginia training.

Bettina's brown eyes had lighted with indignation; she had drawn her body to its full height; her scorn had been superb as she had swept by him.

"I should have expected you to protect me from insults, not to offer me one!" Beyond the doorway she had turned and flung at him: "I ordered a car yesterday; there were no prairie schooners available, or I should have been more loyal to my American ancestors!"

For a fleeting moment F. D. had a desire to laugh; this last speech had been so childish that he forgot she was an impertinent daughter as well as a snobbish young woman. She was so the willful Bettina of the Texas plains, who had always been sorry for a naughty deed the moment after it had been committed. Now she wouldn't be sorry, for she had hardened her heart against him and against the promptings of her softer nature.

So she had ordered an automobile! With his love of horses, he had never cared to own a car, and until now his well-equipped stable had sufficed her needs, but with the coming of Diadoti, everything was changed. F. D.'s heart was full of sorrow and bitterness. He rang for his secretary.

"I am off for Arizona to-night, Boggs. Make my reservations. Tell Mrs. Howe we will close the house and open Seawash on Saturday."

"Yes, sir."

"Miss Lodge will go to Arizona with me or to the country. In the latter case, I'll leave you here to assist her."

"Yes, sir." Boggs withdrew to carry out his orders.

F. D. left the library and went up the stairs. At Bettina's door he hesitated a moment before knocking. When he did, a faint voice said: "Come in."

Bettina turned from her desk as he entered, and at the sight of him there was a flash of triumph in her eyes; she felt that his coming meant yielding. But his first words dispelled this thought.

"I am off for Arizona to-night, Bettina. I had a wire from McArthur.

He's put in a lot of new machinery and wants me to look it over. Will you come with me?"

"No, I don't want to go out there. I prefer to go to Seawash, if you will have it opened."

"I've just spoken to Boggs. I'm leaving him here to help you, but I think you might come with me," he said gently.

"Why do you want me to take that long, cross-country ride to see that bleak, sordid mining town?" she asked.

"The mines are your chief worldly possessions, Betty. You ought to take an interest in them for that reason."

"I thought my chance of 'worldly possessions' was very uncertain just now," she flashed.

"All right, then—good-by!" He reached the door and turned. "Come here, Betty."

She obeyed him reluctantly, her face clouded with discontent and resentment. He pretended not to notice, but took her face between his hands and kissed her gently.

"Life is too uncertain for us to take any such chance, Betty."

"Father, I think you might—" Her voice broke, and her big eyes appealed.

F. D. felt himself weakening. "I'll be home in ten days," he told her hurriedly. "We'll go into it more fully then."

CHAPTER II.

He was met at the station by McArthur, the superintendent of the mines, in a big red automobile. The car was driven by a young man whom nature had intended for a blond, but the sun and wind of the Southwest had tanned his skin to a brown only a shade darker than the hair that showed beneath his motor cap. A pair of dark-gray eyes looked out from the browned face, and a straight, fine nose rose

above a mouth of strength and beauty of line.

F. D. looked at the young chauffeur with an admiration that he took no pains to conceal. He prided himself on his judgment of men and horses, and this young man pleased his expert eye. He said to himself that he had never seen the physical equal of this product of an Arizona mining town.

As the car rolled along the dusty road, the superintendent drowsed in his ear of mines and miners. F. D. listened, but his eye was fastened on the back of the driver—the broad, athletic shoulders, the well-shaped head, the blond hair showing below the cap. He was as perfect in line and feature as a fine drawing, and he had the eyes of a man. McArthur had introduced him as "Mr. Harper, one of our young engineers. Our chauffeur was laid up, and he was good enough to bring me over."

He had responded to the introduction in a way that pleased the millionaire. There had been interest without curiosity, courtesy without a suggestion of sycophancy. F. D. was curious to know more about him.

When they reached McArthur's house, Lodge spoke to the young man: "That was a rough way. If you are as good an engineer as you are a driver, we are glad to have you out here."

Harper's lips parted in a smile, a particularly engaging smile. "But I'm not. I'm a good chauffeur, but as an engineer I just about qualify, I guess." He touched his cap and was off.

"Who is that young man?" F. D. asked, as he walked up the path to the house.

"Name is Pendleton Harper, from one of the Carolinas. Came out here two years ago."

"For his health?"

"Lord, no! I think his fortune ailed him. He has never said, but I imagine he had money and ran through it. At

any rate, I gave him a job, and now it would be hard to get along without him."

"Valuable?"

"Not especially as an engineer, but he is the life of the place. That smile of his seems to get everybody."

"Educated, of course?"

"Yes, after a fashion. However, to do Pen justice, I think he knows more than he gives out. He has doctored a lot of the children about here, and the women think he is great. But I guess they are prejudiced." McArthur smiled.

"Good blood. I can tell by looking at him," the other said thoughtfully.

"I suppose so," McArthur answered, but his mind was on other things, and he went on: "As soon as we have had dinner, I want to take you over the Lady Betty. Everything is running in great shape. I think we would get fine results with a similar system in the Blackhound."

"Yes, yes, to be sure!" F. D. answered absently.

All through dinner this fit of abstraction lasted, to the discomfiture of the superintendent, who was at a loss to understand this change in his guest. He wondered why a man should come all the way from the East to see property in which he was apparently so little interested.

Later in the day, as they were returning from their tour of the mine, they saw Pendleton Harper walking ahead of them. F. D. turned abruptly to McArthur.

"Will you ask that young man to come to see me this evening?"

He went into the general store, leaving the superintendent to catch up with Pendleton, who, all unconscious of the interest he had aroused in the great man from the East, was whistling gayly, stopping often to call out some word of greeting to the women and children who were gathered on their

front porches, hoping to catch sight of the owner of the Lady Betty.

After supper, Mr. Lodge strolled out to smoke his black cigar and to wait the coming of Pendleton Harper. He walked up and down the porch, thinking. Presently he saw the young man swinging along. He had discarded his khaki trousers and flannel shirt, and the blue suit that replaced them showed, in spite of its wear, that it had come originally from the hands of a good tailor. He carried his cap in his hand, leaving his fair hair and brown face exposed to the last rays of the sun.

When he saw F. D., he quickened his pace and called out: "Good evening, Colonel Lodge," with a smile of such kindly intimacy that for the first time in his life the older man knew what he had missed in not having a son.

"Good evening," F. D. answered heartily. "But you've got me wrong. I'm just a private."

"Honest?" Harper asked, as he held out a cordial hand. "Well, in my part of the country, when a man looks as you do, he is called 'colonel.'"

"Where is that—Carolina?" F. D. asked, indicating a chair.

"If you don't mind, I'll sit on the step." The young man placed an ample rocker for Lodge, and seated himself on the top step before he answered: "Yes, Ca'lina. Did you know by my accent?"

"No, from McArthur. I asked him about you."

Pendleton's smile was not one of surprise. A man with such shoulders and eyes grows used to the interest of his fellow man—and woman.

"Do you know Charleston?" he asked eagerly.

"No, not well. You see, I came originally from Virginia."

"Yes, I know you did."

"Is that so? How did you know? I am usually called a Texan."

"I know just where you were born—in Culpepper County." Then, to relieve the other's curiosity, he went on: "My mother told me a lot about you. She was from that part of the country. Her name was Courtney Pendleton."

"What?" Lodge cried. "Your mother Courtney Pendleton? God bless my soul!" He looked at the youth with a new interest. "I see now. From the first, your face has puzzled me, and to think of your being Miss Courtney's son! Why, she was the belle of the county when I was a little fellow."

"She taught your Sunday-school class."

"She did, and, Lordy, how we all loved her! Say, my boy, what are you doing 'way out here?"

"That's another story—not exactly to my credit," Harper said seriously, looking at F. D. with something so fearless and fine in his clear gray eyes that the older man hitched his chair nearer and laid one hand on his shoulder.

"I was young myself once—you can tell me if you like."

"The year I graduated at Charlottesville, an uncle of mine—you may have known him—Herbert Pendleton—died, and left me fifty thousand. Three years later, I was dead broke and hadn't done a lick of work in the meantime. I came West to establish my fortune." He smiled whimsically.

"And how are you succeeding?"

"Not getting rich or famous, but the air is great out here." He stretched his arms and drew in a deep breath of it. "I feel like a different man—steady after much wabbling, you know."

"Good looks are sometimes a great curse to a young man."

Pendleton's face flushed. "It's a curse to be a young fool and have a lot of money you never earned."

"That's true enough." F. D. thought of his Bettina as he spoke. "You would like to get East, I suppose?"

"Would I? To see the walled gardens of Charleston and to smell the jessamines— Oh, I'll get back yet, colonel—I beg your pardon, Mr. Lodge."

"That's all right. In fact, I must say, after all the things I have been called—rancher, cowboy, Texas Croesus, and unprogressive—I find 'colonel' rather soothing. By the way, it was my daughter who called me 'unprogressive.'"

"As a joke?" young Harper asked.
"No, in dead earnest."

"You're a long way ahead of the procession, not to contradict Miss Lodge. I saw her picture in a Sunday paper not long ago."

"I have a better one here." F. D. took from his inner pocket a small picture of Bettina. It was several years old, but it had been taken by an artist who had caught the best in her face—the firm modeling of the cheek, the large, expressive eyes, the lips parted in a half smile. It was the picture of a gracious, fine-natured girl, the Betty that her father loved, not the haughty beauty.

"She is lovely," Pendleton said, and after a moment he added: "She has your force."

"She has somebody's." F. D. laughed, and changed the subject to automobiles.

Pendleton warmed to the subject; racing machines had been his hobby while his money had lasted, and he still had a weakness for them.

"I'm not keen on mining, or the Arizona climate, in spite of the air. And sometimes I think I'll go East and get a job as a chauffeur," he said, with a laugh.

At that particular moment Ferdinand D. saw light. The dim idea in the back of his brain shaped itself in this new light, and his answer to the other's jest was: "You are on. I need a chauffeur. Come East with me."

"Why, I—"

"I want you for three months, to stay with me at Seawash, as my chauffeur. At the end of that time, I'll take you in—" His voice dropped to a low pitch.

That night he wrote his daughter:

DEAR BETTINA: I am sorry we made such a mess of things in our last talk. I have thought it all over, and while I can't faithfully say that I have changed my mind, I have come to see your point of view in a clearer light. Now I make this proposition: If you will wait four months, at the end of that time, if you still wish to be a countess, I will consent, and will make the proper financial arrangements. Until the four months have passed, there is to be no talk of an engagement, though you may see the count whenever and as often as you like.

I think this is fair; four months of reflection, and then your decision. As to my objection to the automobile, it was not sound, only sentiment. I have an excellent chauffeur for you; recommended as capable and sober and of good appearance. Wire your answer to Annex, Chicago. I will be there Wednesday. Your devoted and progressing

FATHER.

CHAPTER III.

In Chicago, Ferdinand D. found a telegram from Bettina which read:

Thanks for letter. Accept proposition. Glad you have chauffeur. BETTINA.

He read the message and smiled broadly at Pendleton, who stood at his side. "Very good, very good!"

The young man smiled sympathetically, though he little guessed what was giving F. D. such satisfaction.

They hurried to the waiting taxi and were soon aboard the New York train, and for the first time Harper had leisure to think of the sudden change in his fortune. Had he been by nature curious, he would have spent much time trying to guess the plan in the colonel's mind, but he gave it little thought. He liked the mystery, the excitement; he felt that the train was speeding him on his way to an adventure; he was happy

that he was returning East, and, above all, he liked the bluff old gentleman.

In New York they separated, Ferdinand D. to proceed to the country, Harper to stay over in the city until the next day, when he was to join the family at Seawash.

"Now, boy," F. D. said on parting, "it's clear—isn't it?—that you are to be my chauffeur for a few months. It isn't exactly the position I want you to have, even for a short time, but I want you near me, and you know I am not going to forget that you are Miss Courtney's son."

"That's all right, colonel. I'm not quite so keen on the aristocracy business as I used to be," Pendleton answered.

"We do get it rubbed out of us. I did on the Texas plains. However, I want you to remember that in birth you are the equal of any man or woman. I want you to keep a good hold on your sense of humor, and," with a final pat on the shoulder, "always call me 'colonel,' even when Bettina objects."

"Will she?"

"She's an uncertain little lady; she might. Good-by until to-morrow."

This parting talk stayed with Pendleton. What did the colonel mean, what was it all about, and why was he to keep a hold on his sense of humor? That was a useless precaution; it had never left him, when everything else had. It was puzzling, and he was not fond of puzzles. He put it out of his mind and started out to see New York.

At ten the next morning he was on his way to Seawash. Mr. Lodge met him at the station. He was in a smart cart, behind a Kentucky mare that was the pride of his stable.

"Good morning, colonel. Great horse that."

"Watch her go." F. D. spoke to her; she stretched her nimble legs and took

the cart spinning down the fine country road.

Seawash, the country home of the Lodges, was five miles from the station, and the road they traveled ran for the most part by the sea. It was a perfect June day, the grass and trees still a soft green; the summer sun shone on the rippling sea, which was dotted with pleasure boats.

"Well, Pendleton, you have lost your job," F. D. said, after he had given the other time to get the lay of the land.

"How is that?" Harper asked.

"Well, I don't need a chauffeur as much as I do a secretary. Old Boggs, who has been with me twenty years, had a stroke yesterday, and I am bundling him off to Europe for a rest. In the meantime, I want you to take his place."

"I—your secretary! I'm afraid I'd make a much better chauffeur. I am an evil speller!"

"Don't mind that when you have me behind you. This is a good chance for you to get the hang of my business."

"But—"

"No buts. You will do it?"

"Yes, and be delighted to serve you, colonel."

"Good, good! There is our place."

Pendleton saw a fine old colonial house, with deep, vine-covered porches. The lawn about it stretched, a soft green surface, for fully two acres, and a white roadway wound through the grounds and passed a veranda at the right side of the house. It commanded a wide view of the sea, and just in front of F. D.'s estate only a narrow embankment separated the roadway from the water. Several sailboats were close in to shore; far out, a yacht could be seen. Looking upshore, Pendleton saw the curve where the sea lapped a sandy beach.

The beautiful house and grounds, the sea and its crafts, the salt breeze, the warm, summer sun—all of this, after

the wide stretch of desert and the sordidness of the mining town, gave him a feeling that he had slipped from a bad dream into fairyland. How kind fate was to bring him to this lovely spot! He wondered what the duties of a secretary were.

A groom ran out to meet them and stood at the mare's head as they descended. Pendleton followed F. D. through a French window that opened off the veranda into the library. It was a large, cheerful room, a perfect expression of the wholesomeness of its owner. Two windows looked out over the lawn. From one you could see the stables; the other was the one through which they entered. Double doors connected the library with the music room, and another door led into the hall. There were books everywhere; shelves of them ran around the walls, and even the table held its share. A bowl of roses stood on the mantel.

"Ah," said F. D., as he sniffed the heavy fragrance, "how is that, after two years of cactuses?"

Before Pendleton could answer, the door opened, and a voice called:

"Father."

"Yes, Bettina." He turned.

"I thought you were alone," the girl stammered. Stammering was a thing Bettina Lodge was not apt to do, but the sudden sight of this strange young man, with steady gray eyes looking out from his bronzed face and a figure that the Greeks might have envied, was enough to disconcert for a moment even the perfect poise of F. D.'s daughter.

"This is Mr. Pendleton Harper, who is to take Boggs' place," F. D. explained.

Bettina acknowledged the introduction with a slight nod and a few murmured words. Pendleton was equally lacking in cordiality. About the colonel's mouth a strange smile hovered.

CHAPTER IV.

A month had not gone by before Ferdinand D. wondered how Seawash had been durable before the coming of Pendleton. Purely as a secretary, the young man might not be all that could be desired, but he took hold of the work intelligently and grew daily in understanding of the methods that had brought his employer success. F. D. was delighted at his progress, and his plans for the young man grew more definite as time went on.

But it was after work was over that Pendleton shone. He had a genius for making the days pass swiftly. Every morning, when the colonel tumbled out of bed and hurried to his bath, he wondered like a boy what the day's fun would be. Under Pen's guidance, he explored every quarter of the surrounding country; there were long trips behind fast horses or in the motor car, when Bettina was not using it. Hitherto unknown places, where the food was excellent and life could be viewed from new and interesting angles, were discovered.

In the afternoons, they went a mile up the shore, where there was fine surf bathing. The colonel's appetite improved; his health, his spirits had never been so high. The troubled look that Bettina and the count had brought to him had vanished; their affair no longer seemed a matter of moment. He had made his bargain with his daughter, and for the time being he put the future out of his head.

In the meantime, Pendleton had made friends with Captain Baker, a deep-sea fisherman, who owned the *Clara*, a roomy sailboat, famous for her speed. The captain was a man with a loving and intimate knowledge of the sea. In his youth he had shipped in some of the freighters that traded with South American ports. Later, he had commanded a whaler in the arctic regions,

and now, in the evening of his life, he plied his trade in calmer waters and lived a happy, secure existence in a vine-covered cottage by the sea. Pendleton found the captain and his wife much to his liking; their simplicity and thrift were a pleasing contrast to the lavishness and complexity of life at Seawash.

They spent days on the *Clara*, going out to the fishing grounds and sailing back with the setting sun, or seeking shallow waters, to find crabbing a new and exciting sport.

Before this could pall on them, Pendleton suggested that the colonel treat himself to a French racer, so that they could make trips without depriving Miss Lodge of her car for a single hour. F. D., his old dislike of automobiles having vanished, fell in with the suggestion, and there was a trip to the city, which resulted in a low-hung, gray racing car.

And Bettina? Daily her resentment and aloofness grew. From the moment her father introduced the new secretary, she resented his presence and his appearance; and as time went on his attitude toward her piqued and annoyed her, used as she was to the consideration and marked attention of all who came to Seawash. And the worst of it was that her father never once asked her opinion of the newcomer, but took it for granted that she was as delighted as he was with Pendleton. On one occasion, when she had hinted that she was not so favorably impressed with the secretary, he had looked at her a moment incredulously and abruptly changed the subject. He kept from her the fact that he had known Harper's mother, allowing her to think that the young man was a "find."

It was all so unlike her father that Bettina found it difficult to compass the situation. She only knew that, while of old she had completely filled his life and heart, now he was quite inde-

pendent of her. Even long, ardent letters from Diadoti, who was touring the West with some friends, could not quite do away with a strange little ache in her heart.

One warm, summer morning, as she lay back in a chair on the side veranda, Pendleton, passing on his way from the stable, raised his cap.

"Off to the *Clara*?" she asked, in a friendly voice.

"Yes." He paused and turned to her. He was in white, with sleeves rolled up, showing his strong, brown arms. A sweater was thrown over his back, with the sleeves tied across his chest. He was the embodiment of health and well-being.

"Father is very keen about the *Clara*. He never cared for his own boat at all."

"The *Clara* is so small—makes you feel close kin to the water, right under your nose. We like the smell of it, though it's not a rose garden." He smiled, and was about to pass on.

"Aren't you two very selfish?" she asked. "You've never asked me to go with you."

He looked at her with mild surprise in his eyes. "Why, the colonel said he had."

And, of course, the colonel had, but it didn't suit Bettina's purpose to admit it, so she smiled again and asked: "Why do you call him colonel?"

"It suits him, doesn't it?" he asked, proving as evasive as she. Then, without giving her a chance to answer, he went on: "Come with us to-day. I'll do you lots of good. I'll get a coat from your maid. You'll need it coming home."

Before she could say yes or no, he had disappeared from sight. He returned shortly with a coat and a soft white hat.

"And I brought you a veil. Some girls hate to have their hair blow"—he smiled at her—"though it's great when it blows in curls."

Bettina's hair curled beautifully, it pleased her to remember; and it pleased her that he had given her no time to protest against going. She wanted to go, but she would have refused had he given her the chance. She liked the way he carried her coat and hat; it was as if they were very precious. He held the veil to his face, and his smile showed that the faint, rare fragrance pleased him.

"Girls are such wonderful things," he said.

A quick, painful joy stabbed Bettina. Her father was waiting at the front of the house. At sight of him, Pendleton called out: "Miss Bettina is coming with us." He unconsciously reverted to his Southern training in speaking of her.

"Hurrah!" F. D. cried, and they were off.

Captain Baker's boat was anchored half a mile away, and it was the custom to walk to it. Bettina swung along between the two men, her father on her right, Pendleton on her left. Her step kept time with his, and her smile answered his when he turned to her with some commonplace remark.

The colonel was silent. He seemed interested in the scenery about him and oblivious of his two companions. Pendleton was in high spirits, and his enthusiasm was contagious. Bettina began to understand his charm for her father. He had the faculty of endowing an ordinary outing with an atmosphere of festivity and excitement.

The *Clara* was waiting for them, with Captain Baker in charge. She was a fine, light little craft, with room enough for four. The cabin was not inclosed, and the pit was filled with comfortable seats. The sails fluttered in the breeze, the water danced around them, as the captain shoved off.

Bettina lay back on the cushions that Pendleton had arranged for her. Her father sat opposite, deep in the morn-

ing paper. The captain took the tiller, and Harper went forward, stretched his long body out on the deck, and drew in all the salt air his lungs would hold.

An hour passed, and he called out to Bettina to know if the colonel was neglecting her. She said he was, and Pendleton invited her to come up with him if she could stand the sun. He met her halfway and led her forward around the narrow side of the boat. A stiff breeze struck the sail and it swung toward them. Their footing was insecure, and he drew her to him quickly. For a moment she was in his arms; the next she was safely settled in a comfortable position on the forward deck. She was blushing, and held her hand to her eyes as if the sun were to blame.

"It is a bit trying at first, but you'll get used to it."

After that he made no effort to talk to her. It piqued her at first, but this passed, and she realized that the day and the occasion did not call for talk.

The boat sped on in the stiff breeze. The quiet, the wind, the sun were sooth-ing to Bettina. Her nerves relaxed; her thoughts flitted from one thing to another idly, indifferently; her slender, white hands lay still in her lap, and her eyes gazed dreamily ahead.

Two feet from her, Pendleton was stretched on the deck, his cap over his eyes. The repose of his body was complete. There was rest in every beautiful line; even the brown hands were passive.

"Is this how you and father spend your days?" she asked, after a long silence.

He lifted his cap and looked at her. "Most of them. Sometimes we fish. Want to catch crabs?" he asked engagingly.

"Is it exciting?"

"Not exactly—more so than this," he answered.

"Then I think not to-day. I like this—this quiet."

"It's good for you," he said.

"You think I need it?"

"Well—" He hesitated.

"I asked you."

"I think your nerves might be in a better condition, and at times there is a worried look in your eyes that I don't like."

"I didn't know that you were a close observer."

"I observe what interests me." His tone was as impersonal as if she were not the person under discussion.

After luncheon she slept for a while, and then, as the afternoon waned, went forward again to join Pendleton on the deck. He was inclined to talk, and she encouraged him. He told her of the West, of the little Arizona mining town and its people. He sang in a lusty baritone some of the Russian and Polish folk songs that he had picked up from the workers. He had come close to the people out there, and he spoke of them earnestly and sympathetically. Bettina liked to listen; it stimulated her, broke her from her accustomed line of thought. She said to herself that she would spend many days on the *Clara*.

When she got home, she found a telegram from Diadoti, announcing that he had returned from the West and would see her on the morrow.

CHAPTER V.

After reading the telegram, Bettina walked slowly upstairs. In her room, she undressed deliberately, receiving the assistance of Mathilde without a word of direction. Why had Diadoti returned two weeks earlier than he had expected? She should have felt flattered by his eagerness to see her, but as a matter of fact she was rather annoyed by his return. She persuaded

herself that it was her father's opposition that had spoiled her pleasure in the thought of her lover's visit.

"Miss Carter comes to-morrow?" Mathilde asked, as she brushed out Bettina's long red-brown hair.

"Yes; for a moment I had forgotten." She knew now, with a feeling of great relief, why Diadoti's proposed visit failed to arouse in her any enthusiasm.

Marion and the count would not mix well. Indeed, had Bettina sought through her list of friends, she could not have hit on two more uncongenial people. Marion, with her wild, hoydenish ways, her mannish clothes, and her general disregard of conventions, and the Italian nobleman, well groomed, cultured, interested less in the things of to-day than in the relics and traditions of bygone times—there could be no common ground for them. She wondered how Diadoti, with his precise, accurate English, would manage a conversation with Marion, whose vocabulary was slang and the technical terms of the athletic world. And Marion was coming for a month, and Diadoti would probably be down for all week-ends!

"It will be miserable, stupid, and she is sure to be rude."

For Marion was violently prejudiced against the European nobility. Her younger sister had married a French marquis, and after a tragic life had been the heroine of a sensational divorce case that had driven her home depleted in fortune and broken in spirit. All the tenderness of Marion's nature went out to this sister, and she was not apt to conceal her dislike for a member of the class that had brought about her misfortune.

Marion Carter was one of the few women whom Bettina really liked; she had looked forward to this visit, and now it was all spoiled. She must find some one else, some other man who

would amuse Marion and make a fourth.

She dined with her father, Pendleton having returned to the Bakers' for supper.

"What is the charm about Captain Baker?" she asked, when F. D. told her.

"Sometimes I think the boy should have followed the sea; it's got an awfully strong grip on him. Besides, Baker is a fine old fellow, and Pen says his wife is a great cook."

"Don't you wish you were with him?" Bettina asked, smiling at him. She knew that it was only courtesy to her that kept him at home, and instinctively she felt how he would revel in the simple supper table of the captain's wife.

"With you across the table, my dear, I couldn't wish to be anywhere else. But Pen is a lazy dog. He doesn't fancy dressing for dinner—that is another attraction the Bakers have for him."

"He gets on well with people, doesn't he?" she asked casually.

"Yes," Mr. Lodge said thoughtfully. "He's likable—magnetic, I guess one would say."

Bettina had an impulse to follow up this talk about the secretary, but she suspected that her father was trying to trap her into confessing her interest in Pendleton. She knew he was not apt to be thoughtful or conservative in speaking of persons or things he liked, and that he cared a great deal for young Harper was plain, yet he was talking of him coolly, almost with a rising inflection, as if he wished her to corroborate his opinion. Betty was wary of this changed father. She shifted the conversation.

"By the way, I had a telegram from Diadoti. He's coming to-morrow afternoon."

"To-morrow? Isn't Marion coming, then?"

"Yes."

"How will they trot together?"

"Abominably."

"Too bad!"

"I've got to find some one to amuse Marion," worried Bettina.

"I don't think you will have to look far," F. D. said pleasantly.

"What do you mean?"

"If I know anything about human nature, she and Pendleton will take to each other in no time."

"But—" She looked at him with startled eyes.

"Now, don't go wrong, Betty. Marion Carter is the realest democrat we know. I haven't a doubt that she will like Pen—that is, if she stays after the count comes. You know she is a bit rabid."

"But—"

"Oh, I am not saying that she is justified. A prejudice is always an unjust thing, but it's usually the strongest thing in a character. We know the count is nothing like her precious brother-in-law, with his debts and habits, but she thinks they are all cut from the same piece."

"But—" she tried again.

"I wouldn't worry," he went on, without giving her a chance to speak. "I'll take Marion off your hands, if the worst comes to the worst. She and I get on famously, and then you will be free to devote yourself to the count."

Bettina looked at him in surprise. Could this be her father speaking, he who had never mentioned Diadoti save in terms of disapproval and acute dislike? And now he was offering to take Marion in charge so that she might give all her time to the Italian! What did it mean? Could he possibly have changed so completely in so short a time? He was not the kind of man who changed. Who had influenced him? Could it be that he no longer cared whether she married Diadoti or not?

Then it flashed over her that he did not care because now he was independent of her; he had Pendleton. She could go and he would scarcely miss her. He was amused, flattered, consoled by a young man whom he had known less than two months; and she, Bettina, his only child, was nothing to him. No one really cared for her; no one appreciated her except Diadoti; he alone perceived in her "those rare and subtle qualities, the possession of which distinguished her from the rest of womankind."

Lost in these thoughts, she did not thank her father for his offer to take Marion in charge; and for fear she had not heard, he repeated it.

"You need not trouble," she said icily. "I can entertain my friends without the assistance of Mr. Harper."

"And me?" he asked, smiling at her.

"Your position in the house is quite different from his, though you don't seem to realize it," she answered.

"I'm bad at picking out my inferiors, Betty," he said, in an even voice.

"There is no question of inferiority," she answered, a bit ashamed of herself.

"Well, there could scarcely be, unless you want to set up that 'aristocracy of dollars' that you say you hate. If you ever care to look in that book of the F. F. V.'s in the library, you will see that Pen's ancestors make ours look like the proverbial 'thirty cents.'"

F. D. had not intended to tell her this at the present stage of the game, but he was glad that she had forced him to do it. It had strengthened his hand and given her new food for thought.

The rest of the dinner was eaten in silence. Afterward, they adjourned to the library, where coffee was served.

Ferdinand D. sat by the open window and lighted his long, black cigar. Across the room, Bettina lounged in a deep chair; once she glanced toward the shelf that held the history of the

families of Virginia. Her father saw the glance and smiled to himself.

A little later, he asked her to play. Without answering, she rose and passed into the music room. She was feeling in no mood for music, but she played on through her father's favorites. Not that she had any desire to please him; she was annoyed with him; she resented his prophecy that Marion and Pendleton would be great friends. Of course, Marion was by nature friendly, but Pendleton had not shown the least interest in any of the women and girls who had been at Seawash during the summer.

Her thoughts changed with the music, and Diadoti came to her. She could see his small, dark face, with the large, languid eyes and the mouth whose character was concealed by a smart mustache. She thought of her position as his wife. Ambition was strong in her; all her life she had longed to be set apart from other people, to be recognized as a little different, and as a countess she would be—her social position would be secure and enviable. Lack of money had prevented Diadoti from enjoying the fullness of his birthright, but she would remedy that. She was practical; she knew where to strike, and when; the culture and charm of old Europe would be open to her. Absorbed in this prospect, she lost her irritability and broke into a gay Viennese waltz. At its height, there was the sound of a shot. Her hands fell with a crash on the piano; she was dreadfully frightened.

Then a voice close by said: "Don't be afraid. It's that crazy Jules fooling with his gun," and Pendleton passed through the music room out of the French window that opened on the veranda. She had not known that he was with her father in the library. He must have come in while she was playing. She was glad that he had spoken; it took away her fear.

"Where are you going, father?" she asked, as the old man followed his secretary.

"To the stables, to see what is wrong."

She went after him and stood on the veranda, straining her eyes in the direction of the stable. Lights were burning, and she heard the voices of excited men; then came the chug of a motor, and the next moment the big car swung out on the drive headed toward her. Pendleton was at the wheel, and she called out to him:

"What is wrong?"

"Jules shot himself in the hand. Going to the village for a doctor."

A swift impulse seized her. "Wait! I'll go with you." And she dashed down the steps.

He slowed up immediately, jumped out, and opened the door of the car for her, but she ignored it and stepped into the seat beside the driver's. Without a word, he slammed the door, sprang in beside her, seized the wheel, and sped the car on its way.

A short distance, and they turned into the roadway. The village was five miles distant, and the road ran by the sea the greater part of the way. It was a moonlight night, warm and golden. The sea was calm, scarcely a ripple showing in the soft light. Only the gentle lap, lap of the waves on the sandy shore broke the stillness. The road before them lay white and deserted, and Pendleton took it on high gear and "wide open."

A sudden cloud of fragrance engulfed them, and he spoke for the first time.

"We're passing the Holts' clover field."

Bettina inhaled the fragrance. "Isn't it wonderful? The night—everything." She spoke simply, without her usual sense of effect. The racing of the car through the clover-smelling night stirred her spirit. "We haven't had

such a night this summer. I'm so glad I came."

"So am I."

"Really?"

"Yes," without looking at her.

"But you didn't ask me to come?" She couldn't resist it. It was not, she hastily assured herself, that she wanted to flirt with her father's secretary, but she was young, sensitive to the beauty of the night, exhilarated by the wind that brushed her face—not unconscious of the magnetism of the man at her side.

He did not answer her last speech by word; he turned to her with a smile—a winning, boyish smile, made subtle by the moonlight. She could not read its meaning.

They were near the doctor's and Pen had slowed down the machine before she thought of Jules.

"How did he shoot himself?"

"He was cleaning the thing, and it went off."

"Hurt much?"

"No, right hand torn. The colonel was dressing it when I left. Any one could have attended to it, but Jules was sure he would die unless a real, live doctor looked it over."

"He won't be able to run the car for a while?"

"No."

"You'll have to get me some one else. I have guests coming to-morrow."

"I'll take the job for a while—that is, if you want me."

"No, I'll use the horses to-morrow."

"All the horses but three were shipped to Kentucky to-day. Didn't you know?"

"No."

"Only two riding horses and the colonel's mare are left, and they are repairing the road cart, so you will have to let me play chauffeur to-morrow." He stopped the car, and before she could answer had jumped out and was on his way to the doctor's door.

She heard him knock and saw the door open. A few words passed and he returned to her.

"The doctor is coming right along. Poor old Jules! I warned him this morning about that gun."

"What was he doing with it?"

"I'm not in his confidence, but I fancy it has something to do with an ancient love affair," Pendleton said with a laugh.

"Love affair?"

"Yes. They aren't confined to the aristocracy, you know. Butlers, chauffeurs, secretaries even, fall in love!" He ended with a laugh that piqued her.

"I had no idea you were so well informed on human nature," she said mockingly.

"No? Why, 'my brother' is an open book," he returned, in the same spirit.

"And your sister?"

"A sealed book—not for a diffident man to attempt."

"Wouldn't it be more honest to say 'indifferent'?"

"Scarcely." He turned at the sound of steps on the gravel path.

Doctor Boyd, a small, elderly man, stood by the car, bag in hand, and acknowledged his introduction to Miss Lodge with a smile and a bow. Pendleton helped him into the car, sprang into his seat, wheeled the car around, and they were off to Seawash. No word was spoken on the way.

Bettina looked about her. There was the same moonlight on the water, the same white roadway, and the fragrance of the clover field—all were there, but the enchantment was gone. She no longer felt excited, lifted up; she was annoyed with Pendleton. She regretted that she had come with him, reproached herself for her unsolicited friendliness, and resolved to ignore him in the future.

As they turned into the Seawash drive, he broke the silence:

"I'll take the doctor to the stable first."

Her father was waiting for them. Pendleton offered his hand to help Bettina from the car, but she did not see it apparently, and got out unassisted. She started toward the house and he accompanied her. Neither spoke until they reached the veranda.

"Mr. Harper," she said then, in a formal voice, "please don't suggest to father that you take Jules' place. I do not wish it."

"Certainly not."

He stood at the bottom of the steps, looking up at her. She tried not to see how strong and fine he was, but as he stood there, with his cap in his hand, the clear outline of the slender, supple body and the pose of the beautiful head showed in the moonlight to a new advantage.

"You understand," he went on, in his slow, Southern voice, "I offered my services to save you inconvenience."

"Yes, I understand; but the idea of your being a chauffeur is—" She paused for a word.

"Is what?" he asked.

"It's ridiculous. Good night!"

He stood for a moment as she had left him. A slow smile played over his face, but there was a touch of sadness in the smile. Then he went slowly back to the stable.

Half an hour later, Bettina, from her window, saw the car swing again into the roadway. Pendleton was taking the doctor home. Her eyes followed the machine until it was only a black speck on the white road. She drew in her breath, and with it came the clean fragrance of the clover field. She began to undress slowly. The count was coming to-morrow; her father was prepared to receive him graciously; she assured herself that she was a very happy girl. But as she stood by her window and looked out over the moon-

kissed sea, she felt an unconquerable depression.

CHAPTER VI.

After all, it was Pendleton who drove Bettina to the station the next morning to meet Marion Carter. Jules was laid up with his wounded hand, and there was no one at Seawash who could handle the car. And with the horses gone, she was driven to pocket her objections and to ask Pendleton very sweetly if he would take her over to meet the eleven o'clock train.

He said, "Certainly, I will," but with no evidence of the enthusiasm he had shown when he had made his offer the night before.

"And there is another guest coming at four. Do you mind?"

"Not at all, but it won't be necessary. I phoned to the city, and they are sending down a good man on the twelve o'clock train."

"That was thoughtful of you."

For answer, he touched his cap, threw on the power, and the car went spinning down the drive. They went over the same ground they had covered the night before, but then she had been at his side, and now she sat behind him, her eyes turned resolutely to the sea. They soon came back to the man before her, however, studying the broad shoulders, the blond hair, the tanned skin. In her mind, she could see the clear gray eyes and the straight mouth that smiled so readily.

She paired Pendleton with Diadoti in her mind, and wondered what the secretary would think of the Italian count. And then she asked herself angrily what his opinion on that, or any other subject, mattered.

As the train pulled in, she left the car and stepped across the platform to meet Marion. Pendleton followed, and after the two girls had exchanged greet-

ings, stepped forward to relieve Marion of her bag.

"I'll see to your baggage," he said quietly.

Marion gave him a friendly glance from her kind, intelligent eyes. She had a frank face, with no claim to beauty save the healthy glow of the skin and the fine eyes.

"There's just one trunk—I travel light." She handed him the check.

Bettina did not introduce Pendleton to Marion for reasons that she could scarcely have named to herself. A stubborn, ugly spirit ruled her for a moment, and when it passed, it was too late; the car was rushing home.

Marion pointed to the young man and asked, in an incredulous whisper: "Chaffeur?"

Bettina shook her head and switched the conversation to other matters. But as they were leaving the car, she thanked Pendleton for driving her, and then introduced him to Marion.

As the two girls entered the house, Marion asked in a stage whisper: "Who is he?"

"Father's secretary," was all Bettina replied.

The next moment Marion was wringing F. D.'s hand, while Bettina stood by, wondering why gray eyes that looked out between long lashes were such disconcerting—such attractive things.

CHAPTER VII.

After his introduction to Marion, Pendleton drove back to the station to meet the new chauffeur, who was due on the noon train.

He was in a high good humor, and whistled as he sped the car along the familiar way. He was thinking of Marion, of her frank, friendly eyes and her cordial handshake. He knew she would like days on the *Clara*, that the gray racer, under full speed, would exhilarate her. He felt that she could

laugh long and loud over trifles. It was strange that she was a friend of Bettina's, with her reserve, her pride, her lack of gentleness.

At that moment the car raced past the clover field, and the memory of last night's ride flashed upon him. He could see again Bettina's uplifted face as she had inhaled the fragrance of the field, her eyes tender and shining in the moonlight; he could hear her low and vibrant voice as she had spoken of the beauty of the night. He pressed the lever violently, sending the car forward with a plunge.

He reached home with the new chauffeur too late for luncheon with the rest of the household, but as he was satisfying a healthy appetite in the deserted dining room, he heard a light footstep on the threshold, and Bettina entered. Pendleton rose.

"Want me, Miss Lodge?" he asked.

"No, I—— Did you find my handkerchief, Jordan?" she asked the butler.

"No, miss," he answered, looking under the table.

"Here it is," Pen said, taking a handkerchief from his pocket and handing it to her with a smile. "I was going to give it to you later."

As she took it, she blushed. She had not left it in the dining room, had not even missed it, but on her way upstairs she had heard Pen's voice, and a generous impulse had impelled her to stop to apologize for her rudeness of the morning. But now that he had put her to confusion by offering the handkerchief, the generous impulse was checked. Nevertheless, she had come to explain her slight in not introducing him to Marion until the last minute, and Bettina was apt to stick to a plan.

As the butler left the room, she said stiffly: "I did not miss my handkerchief, as I suppose you know, and what prompted me to use such a Jane Austen excuse I don't know."

"It didn't occur to me that it was an excuse."

"You know you didn't find this one in here."

"No, in the car; but I know you have more than one." He smiled whimsically.

"I heard your voice, and I came in because I wanted to apologize."

"For what?" he asked.

Her face crimsoned; she felt that he was deliberately trying to disconcert her.

"I thought I was rude to you this morning."

"I'm sure you were not," he answered simply.

"But——"

"And if in some small way you were, don't let it worry you. You are like the colonel—you have an abnormal sense of the rights of the other fellow."

"Do you think so?" she asked wistfully. Somehow she knew, though she had never been told, that she was considered selfish and self-absorbed.

"I think you are more like him than you realize."

"Really?" Her anger against him was gone; his tone had been so frankly cordial and his reference to her sense of fairness pleased her. Whatever others might think, she wanted to believe that she was always just. "Then, if for a moment this morning you thought me rude, you don't think so now?" she went on, looking at him with an arch, appealing face.

He had never seen her appear to such advantage.

"I swear by this glass of perfect Moelle that I have no memory of your being other than kind and—adorable!" He raised the glass and held it at arm's length for a moment. The fine, clear gray eyes were looking at her with all the charm, all the magnetism, of the man in their gaze.

Bettina drew back; she was startled,

a bit afraid. A little, nervous laugh escaped her, and her eyes avoided his.

"See!" he said gayly, and drained the glass.

Without further word, she quitted the room, and all afternoon was haunted by the feeling that she had passed through a strange and exciting experience. In common with most young women of her generation, she was given to analyzing her sensations and mental processes. She felt that for the first time she had touched the real man behind the casual, impersonal exterior of her father's secretary. His gray eyes, usually laughing or abstracted, had shown for a moment keen and eager. She wondered if it had been the way the light fell on them, or had something in her called forth that new intensity?

Then she pulled herself up sharply, aware that her vanity was about to mislead her. She forced herself to admit that she had driven him into a corner where he must either be rude or meet her coquetry with a decidedly personal note. And he was never rude; she knew that instinctively. She was annoyed with herself that, on the eve of Diadoti's arrival, she had deliberately tried to arouse in her father's secretary some show of admiration. Her success reflected no credit on her—if it were a success.

Left to himself, Pendleton finished his luncheon and joined F. D. in the library. He reported the coming of the new chauffeur and his ability to handle the car.

"Poor old Jules will be out of commission for some time," he said.

"Did Betty ask you to order the car for four?"

"No; she said other guests were coming; that was all."

"Yes; Count Diadoti." F. D. smiled wryly.

"You evidently aren't keen on him, colonel," Pen said, with a laugh.

"Would you want your only daughter to marry a little, swarthy, jingling, impecunious Italian?"

"Oh!" Pendleton said slowly. "I didn't know it was like that."

"Well, it isn't, exactly—that is, not quite. It will never be, maybe. But it riles me to think that a little fellow who comes about to your shoulder should want to marry my Betty."

"Italian, you said?" Pen asked, in an even voice.

"Yes; that is, partly. His grandmother, I think, was an Englishwoman. She brought him up. He speaks English perfectly—better than any of us, perhaps—but his mind and soul are Latin—son of the church and a collector of cameos and candlesticks and cope buttons—whatever they are." F. D.'s voice exploded with contempt.

Pendleton did not answer. He was looking out of the open window. He could see the gardener moving about among the roses, the sunlight on the white walks and green lawns. He had seen it all many times, but now it seemed to make new patterns. He was unconscious that the older man was looking at him with sharp, questioning eyes. He caught F. D.'s last words and turned.

"Candlesticks? What for?"

"Fad, of course. He has quite a collection, and the last time I saw him he had run across two colonial sticks that he prized as being examples of early American art. I had seen the like of such 'examples' in Virginia, so I couldn't rave properly. Oh, there's no doubt the count is an expert candlestick man." He smiled ruefully. "You have noticed that large cameo that Betty wears now and then?" he asked suddenly. "Well, it's a rare piece—possibly the work of Valerio Vincenzo, the count says. The joke is on Betty. She never cared for it until the count raved over it. It came from England with my grandmother, and

must have been brought into England by one of our far-back ancestors. Dia-doti was voluble about it. He is some talker when he gets on his hobbies, and not an uninteresting chap, but who wants a son-in-law of that kind?"

Pendleton was silent. He found no word to answer Mr. Lodge and he knew from experience that these outbursts did not call for answers. The old gentleman relieved his feelings in them and promptly forgot his grievance; though Pen did not classify this with the trifles that sometimes annoyed the colonel to a state of explosion.

"Well, my boy, all this has nothing to do with the present, and, as they say down South, I won't take the quinine till I've got the chill."

"I hope the bitter dose won't come to you, colonel."

"Maybe it won't. Have you met the young lady who came this morning?"

"Miss Carter? Yes."

"Well, that is where we need your help a little."

"How?"

"She shares my notions about counts, and Betty is worried because they are to be here together. So I want you to take charge of her, amuse her, help Bettina out. The gray car is at your disposal and your time is your own, And, remember"—F. D. rose and laid his hands on Pen's shoulders—"just remember you are my friend—I wish I could say my son. But no hanging back on account of your job—understand?"

"Thank you, sir. The old South did something fine when she made men like you."

"The old South, my boy, produced what this country will never see again—a society where simplicity, beauty, chivalry, and courage met. What we call society now swings hard between vapidity and vulgarity. But now be off with you and let me take a nap, to

be ready to hear about the candlesticks."

Pendleton snatched up his cap and was about to leave the room when there was a knock at the door, and Jordan entered with a telegram.

"For you, Mr. Harper," he said.

Pendleton tore it open, read it, then looked at F. D. and laughed.

"That ends it, colonel. This is a wire from Ned Rivers, a friend of mine in Louisiana. He says: 'Verdict went against us, but am going to appeal it.'"

"What is it all about?" F. D. asked.

"My river plantation, or, rather, the plantation that should have been mine. It has been in litigation two years."

"You've never spoken of it before."

"I never gave it much thought, never expected to win it. Ned has been fighting for it. You see, the plantation belonged to my Aunt Martha Harper, father's sister."

"Well?"

"She always said that I was to have the property, and, in fact, she told me once that there was a will to that effect; but when she died, it was not to be found, and there was one leaving everything to Larry Summers and his wife, instead. He was her overseer, and his wife nursed my aunt during her last illness."

"What is the value of the property?"

"It's a river plantation, worth between thirty and forty thousand; maybe more."

"You're very cool over such a loss," F. D. said dryly.

"It isn't exactly a loss. I never had it, never even counted on it. Besides, these days are too fine to worry, and next winter, you know—"

He paused, hearing the faint sound of the piano in the next room, then opened the door. In the music room Marion was at the piano. She greeted him with a cordial smile.

Before he settled himself for his nap, F. D. went to his desk and wrote two

letters, one to his lawyer in New York, the other to Ned Rivers in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, asking for the details of the lawsuit involving the Harper plantation.

And an hour later, Bettina heard Marion's laugh and, going to the window, saw her friend and Pendleton on their way to the kennels, apparently fulfilling her father's prophecy that they would "take to each other immediately."

CHAPTER VIII.

The new chauffeur drove Bettina and Marion to the village to meet the five o'clock train, which brought Count Hercule Diadoti down from the city.

The Italian nobleman stepped from the train followed by his man, who carried two heavy, foreign traveling bags. His face lighted up when he saw the two girls in the car, and he hastened to them. He was a short, slight man, of excellent carriage and dressed in the best continental taste. He wore a dark-green scarf, and Bettina reflected irritably that he always wore green ties. Large, dark eyes looked out from a pale face, and a carefully trimmed mustache gave an added air of smartness to his appearance. He greeted Bettina and Marion with impressive courtesy, and on the homeward ride told them of his Western trip.

"A marvelous country! My concept of space had never been so clear as it was after traveling for days across your land." He spoke with no accent; his precision and an occasional inflection alone betrayed his foreign birth.

"Isn't Frisco a pippin?" Marion asked.

He looked at her for a moment. "Yes," he said slowly, "I am sure that it is."

Bettina laughed. "Only you wonder what a pippin is when it isn't an apple."

The count gave a slight shrug of helplessness.

"I was in Frisco two years ago," Marion went on. "I found it a ripping place. I was with the Jacksons—you know what good sport they are, Betty. I learned the 'trot' out there ages before it got East. Did you learn to dance the 'Texas Tommy'?" She turned to Diadoti with mischief in her eyes.

"No," he said, meeting her mood; "but I saw it, and all the other native dances. They are most interesting, especially if one cares for folk dancing. In these coast dances you see the survival of the Indian dance and a strain of the Spanish, the sexlessness of the one, the sex lure of the other, made a curious thing by their union with the uncouth, rude vigor of the Western American." Diadoti was interested in his subject. He would have gone on, but Marion cut him short by looking at Bettina and laughing aloud.

"Fancy all of that back of the poor, old trot that 'everybody's doing'!"

"Didn't you find the Craigs very charming?" Bettina asked, ignoring Marion's mirth.

"Delightful people—the whole party was so; but we missed you. We spoke of you constantly," he said, looking at her, his large, languid eyes made intense by admiration.

Bettina avoided his gaze. She told herself that Marion's presence in the car made the situation awkward; she was willfully slangy and rude, and Diadoti was annoyed that this antagonistic element had been introduced into their first meeting. She felt her usual ability to handle a difficult situation quite gone. Diadoti had changed, she thought. He was paler, thinner; he even seemed of shorter stature. The West had not agreed with him. She aroused herself from these musings, for Marion had broken in again with questions about the West, and again she had interrupted the count with a teasing laugh. Bettina came to his relief with small talk;

he answered her in monosyllables and did not look Marion's way again.

As their car drew up at the house, Pendleton rolled out of the garage in the gray racer and drove toward them.

"Hello!" Marion cried at the sight of him.

On the veranda, Bettina and Diadoti turned at the sound of her voice. Pen raised his hand in answer to her greeting.

"Ah, you have other guests?" Diadoti inquired, raising his eyebrows slightly.

"No," Bettina said shortly. "Jordan will show you to your rooms, and I'll have tea for you here in fifteen minutes."

CHAPTER IX.

On the south porch, Marion was pouring tea and chattering to Diadoti, who listened with an interest that was not altogether real. The young woman annoyed him with her abrupt speech, her disconcerting laugh, and her voice often too high in pitch for his sensitive ears. But with that respect for money which his own lack of it bred, he listened to her and tried to meet her mood with one equally light.

Marion, conscious of his effort toward affability, showed the gentler side of her nature; she never interrupted him now, and if her eyes would dance with merriment over some of his theories, she turned away that he might not see. She no longer teased Bettina about him; in fact, she glanced often, lovingly, anxiously, at her friend, but her lips never formed the question that was in her mind.

She passed the tea to Diadoti and stood by with the sugar.

"No, thank you. Two slices of lemon."

"What an acid young man!" she said, as she dropped the two slices into his cup. "Cream for you, Betty?"

"No, thank you—and the tea strong, please."

Bettina lay back in a lounge chair. She was looking out toward the rose garden, her thoughts far from the two near her. She was very tired. She had slept little the past two weeks. The constant going and coming of people, the luncheons, dinners, and dances, had worn her out; and there was no rest ahead. Diadoti was to be with them three days longer, and Marion would not leave until Janie, her sister, returned from England, ten days hence. Bettina inhospitably wished them both away. She longed for the quiet of the days before they had come and thought how restful a day on the *Clara*, with her father and Pendleton, would be. Then she wondered where Pendleton was.

"Drink your tea, Betty, before it is dead cold," Marion said.

Bettina smiled and stirred her tea mechanically. Oh, if she could only get away from it all for a while! There had been a time when she could have appealed to her father with some hope of an understanding, but that time had passed. He was in a conspiracy with the others to rob her of her peace of mind. She felt bitter, rebellious, hysterical.

"I often wonder if that young man grew up in that car," Diadoti remarked.

Bettina's glance followed his, and she saw Pendleton in the low, gray car, winding in and out on the drive that would bring him past the veranda on his way to the road. She waited irritably for Marion's shout to him and hoped fervently that it wouldn't come. She felt that she could not stand being left alone with Diadoti while Marion rode off with Pen.

The car came nearer, Pendleton's brown hands manipulating the wheel deftly. His face had lost some of its Arizona tan and was fairer now than the blond hair. His low collar showed his strong, brown neck rising from his

broad shoulders. As he glanced toward the porch, his eyes met Bettina's.

"Hello!" cried Marion. "Want tea?"

"Thank you, no. Are you ready, Miss Lodge?" he said, stopping the car.

"Ready?" Bettina asked.

"You promised to see Captain Baker's new grandson this afternoon—have you forgotten?"

"Why—I—" The blood whipped into her cheeks.

"I wasn't due until five—I'm a little early, but—" He looked at her, and she could not tell whether his eyes appealed or commanded.

She rose from her chair. "But I have no hat or coat—"

"You won't need a coat, and there's Miss Carter's hat. You won't need it, Miss Carter, will you?"

"Certainly not. Take it along, Betty." Marion flung her the soft white hat.

"Will you look after the count, Marion? I shan't be gone long."

"I'll take the best of care of him," Marion assured her heartily.

Pendleton helped her into the car, and in a minute they were out of the grounds on the road to the village. Neither had spoken.

"My sweater is behind you, if you should be cool. I didn't dare let you go upstairs," Pendleton said.

"The whole thing is outrageous," Bettina answered.

He shrugged his shoulders, but the next moment he turned to her. "You are going to forgive me, aren't you?"

"I'm not sure. Where did you learn to fib so glibly? You're a perfect adept."

"I was glib, wasn't I?" he asked, looking at her like a small boy who expects praise for some feat of daring.

"I didn't even know that Captain Baker had a child, not to mention a grandchild," Bettina went on in a grieved tone.

"Why, didn't you ever hear the cap-

tain speak of his Minnie? She's his daughter. Her husband was lost out there"—he pointed to the sea—"four months ago. The baby came a week ago. They are tremendously happy over it." Bettina did not answer, and he went on, in a different tone:

"It was good of you to come."

"What else could I do? You gave me no chance to refuse, and I couldn't discredit you before the others."

"I knew that—I traded on it. Maybe it was mean of me." After a short pause, he added: "No, it wasn't mean at all."

Before she could answer, they had reached the Baker cottage. Pendleton called, and the captain came out. His rough, seamed face was alight with happiness. He said that the young mother and baby were in the best of condition.

"I tell you he's a fine, lusty lad! Good day, miss!"

"You're glad it's a boy, I know, captain," Bettina said graciously.

"Yes, miss; we are glad to have him to take his father's name."

"Here's a present for the youngster, captain," Pendleton said, bringing a small package from his pocket. "It won't fit now, but time passes. He'll be big enough to sail the *Clara* soon. Well, good day to you."

Out of the captain's hearing, he said: "That wasn't so bad?"

"No, but was it worth all your trouble?"

"Yes," he answered, "it was."

He turned the car into a less frequented road that led away from the sea. She did not protest, though she had expected to return home immediately. In reality, she did not want to go back to Seawash just yet. She had no desire for the company of Marion and Diadoti, and, moreover, she wanted to have it out with the man at her side. He had positively avoided her for the past two weeks; why had he now car-

ried her off this way, on a trumped-up excuse? What had prompted him to this adventure? Why— Then like a flash came an answer, a hateful answer.

"You have quarreled with Marion?"

"Why?" he asked in surprise.

"You have!"

"I have not!" he said emphatically.

"Then, why—have you—used me to annoy her?"

"My God!" he exclaimed, under his breath. She saw the blood surge to his face and burn under the tan, the veins of the brown hand bulge as he gripped the wheel. He turned to her with a hard, fierce light in his eyes. "How could you think of such a small thing to accuse me of?"

"I usually look for reasons. It was the only one I could find. It has been some time since you've shown any desire for my company."

"You might have hesitated before you said that."

"But you haven't answered my question."

"You think it needs an answer?"

"It is of no importance. Take me home at once."

"I shan't do it," he said positively.

"Do you realize—" she began.

"Perfectly. That this will cost me my job."

"You seem capable of thinking of small things," she flung at him.

"We all have a mean streak in us. But I'm not going to take you home—not yet." Then, changing his tone, he went on: "Do you think I told that fancy story just to take you to the Bakers'?"

"I don't know, I'm sure; and I don't care."

"Oh, yes, you do; you're consumed with curiosity. And I'll tell you this much—I'm not going to take you home until I see a different look in your eyes and a little color in your face."

He looked around at her, but her

face was turned from him, so that he could see only her cheek. She was so like a pouting child that his own anger evaporated and he smiled whimsically at her.

"There's plenty of color there now, but not the right kind."

"Do you mean—" she began slowly.

"Nothing much; except that it has been warm and you have been going all the time. You haven't had enough sleep—I have seen your light burning till all hours. And a little while ago, as you sat on the porch, you were so white and tired looking—you had a depressed, hunted look. I think I'd have taken you by force if you hadn't come, but you see you instinctively knew what was good for you, so you came."

"But when you left the garage, you had Marion in mind?"

"No. Since you must know, I was going to take the captain for a spin, but I forgot about him when I saw you. Somehow, I thought you wanted me to take you away." He spoke in a low, even tone that soothed her nerves and steadied her.

"You are very good," she said, without looking at him.

"Not at all. Some things about you I understand; that's all."

She wondered if he had ever said that to another woman; then asked herself if it were true—did he understand? The quality of his sympathy was as impersonal as his courtesy, but it was soothing; it placed one under no obligation and left no irritation. She felt that she would like to tell him all the things that troubled and oppressed her and have him talk them away.

They rode on in silence, down a narrow country road which ran between rows of trees that sometimes met overhead. The sun was sinking, and they were riding straight toward it, bathed in its golden glow. They

passed a few houses set far back from the road, with no sign of life about them. It was a way unpopular with motorists; they had it 'to themselves save for an occasional country buggy.

"I have never been here before," Bettina said.

"I found it one day the colonel and I were exploring. Since you didn't have your tea, I am taking you to the little place where we found some famous wine that reminded the colonel of his honeymoon in France. There is the place."

He pointed to a little green house with red blinds, almost hidden in a clump of poplar trees.

Pendleton drove the car near and helped Bettina to alight. They found the place deserted, save for the proprietor, a voluble Frenchman who greeted them effusively and led the way to a tiny garden, where a vine-covered lattice sheltered the tables. The sides were open and surrounded by beds of poppies—red, white, and yellow—riotous in color and profusion. A spicy, warm fragrance filled the air.

Pen selected a table in the corner that gave Bettina a view of the garden and a peep through to the roadway beyond. He sat opposite her where he could see the barn, with chickens scratching about the doorway, almost under the feet of an old white horse that was lazily switching its tail and blinking drowsily in the sunlight. Over everything was the stillness of the country, broken now and then by the far-off whistle of a train.

"How do you like this?" he asked.

"It's very charming here—Old Worldlike, isn't it?" she answered.

"Wait until you have tasted the wine and an omelet."

"Between luncheon and dinner?" she asked.

"Wait until you get the omelet, Monsieur," he called, "two of your

perfect omelets and the white wine, the very best. I have boasted to my lady of it."

"*Oui, oui, monsieur, ze vera best instantly!*" And the little man hurried away.

Pendleton laughed. "See, I pleased him by calling you 'my lady,' and now he'll turn the house inside out. He thinks he scents a romance."

"You are unscrupulous," she said gayly. "Does anything stop you when you want to make a point?"

"Oh, I have my scruples—though just now I don't know what they are. But scruples or no scruples"—he was leaning toward her looking straight in her eyes—"you look heaps better already. Please say you are glad you came!"

"I'm delighted," she said emphatically and smiled at him.

She spoke truly; she was happier than she had been for weeks. She was relaxed, free from the tension she had been under since the coming of Dia-doti and Marion.

"But where is the promised sweater? I am chilled from the ride."

"Are you?" He reached over and touched her hand, touched it with his finger tips first, then let his hand slip over her wrist in real doctor fashion. Marion Carter had more than once declared that he should have been a physician. "You are cold and your pulse is slow," he said professionally. "I'll get the sweater." And he was off to the machine.

Her eyes followed him with involuntary admiration. She thought how unspoiled he was with all the notice that his appearance and personality attracted, when he so easily had his own way with her father, with Marion, with the servants, even with herself. Was his power in the lack of self-seeking in his nature? He never seemed to want anything, never asked help, never sought understanding, never demanded

even attention. His one impulse was to give, though he gave without the emotional accompaniment of an intenser nature.

For the first time she saw the value to him of his casualness, the impersonal quality that had irritated her. It saved him from suffocating attachments; he gave without exhausting himself; he passed through experiences on his way to others, untouched, unencumbered. She wished she were like that—wider in scope, kinder, not so intense, so capable of agony. She shuddered as she remembered how things could hurt.

His return brought her out of this analytical mood.

"Here it is." He laid the sweater about her shoulders. "Better?"

She nodded.

"Here is monsieur and the feast!"

The Frenchman placed the omelets on the table. They were perfect in shape, golden-brown in color, and dusted with sugar. He poured the wine, filling the glasses with clear, pale amber, and stood for a moment smiling benignly on his guests, then discreetly withdrew.

Time passed very quickly as they sat talking over the omelets and the wine. Before they knew it, the shadows on the poppy beds had lengthened until all the riot of color had been softened into a monotone by the first gray of twilight. A long line of swallows wheeled in ever-narrowing circles about the chimney top; the pigeons cooed in their cotes; a cow lowed. In the house a woman's voice, low-pitched, began a lullaby. All about were the stillness and shadowiness of the oncoming night. Then a train whistled shrilly in the distance and roused Bettina from her dreamy content. She started up, exclaiming:

"It's horribly late! We must be going."

"We aren't an hour's ride from Seawash. We can make it by dinner

time." Pendleton looked at his watch. "You must put on the sweater. It will be cooler going home."

He held it for her while she slipped her arms into the long sleeves, then he rolled them up, as if she were a small child being dressed for an outing.

"Now!" he said, as he surveyed her. "Better?"

"Heaps." She shrank into the depths of the sweater, liking the warm roughness of it and the clean, sun-dried odor it gave out.

As he helped Bettina into the car, the Frenchman came out and called: "Bon soir, madame, monsieur!"

They answered, laughing into each other's eyes as they did so.

Pen broke his record getting home. As Bettina left him, she said very simply: "Thank you." He touched his cap and was off to the garage.

The rest of the evening Bettina moved about in a queer, abstracted mood. She had the feeling of one set apart, lifted up, touched and vitalized by a new and appealing adventure. When she spoke, which was only in answer to a question, her voice was lower in pitch than usual; it was as if she were afraid to speak out for fear she might frighten away this new mood. She avoided Diadoti, but with no consciousness that she was doing so. She was vaguely aware that he was sulking in a fit of jealousy, but it seemed unimportant and unrelated to her.

After dinner she played for them, then joined the others in a game of bridge. It was a quiet game; Diadoti was moody, Marion less talkative than usual, and Bettina abstracted. F. D. glanced her way often; her face puzzled him. He knew that she had been out with Pen, but he could not read her thoughts.

In a lull in the game, she broke the silence with: "Father, who was it that

had 'the dangerous gift of familiarity'?"

"Bless my soul!" he answered. "It was Mirabeau. But it was the 'terrible gift,' wasn't it?"

"Possibly," she said slowly. "I'm bad at quotations."

"Why did you ask, Betty? Do you know any one who has it?" he questioned teasingly.

"No, of course not," she answered lightly.

But the next moment she bowed her head over the card table to hide from him the color in her face.

CHAPTER X.

Count Hercule Diadoti spent his last three day at Seawash in a state of feverish excitement and anxiety. He seldom saw Bettina alone, and, when he did, her attitude was not one that gave him great assurance. She was quiet, abstracted; a touch of irritability showed itself when he struck the personal note too insistently.

The Italian nobleman was uneasy, worried, wounded in his pride, and haunted by the fear that his suit might in the end prove unsuccessful. That his long, expensive sojourn in America might be of no avail was a possibility tragic enough to alarm a less suspicious nature than Diadoti's. And apart from her fortune, Bettina appealed to him as no other woman ever had. He liked her aristocratic beauty, her hauteur—it fell in with his ideal of his wife. He accused her of coldness, hardness, and a self-assertiveness that was scarcely feminine, but these were flaws that could be overlooked in the light of the many advantages that would accrue to him from a union with the daughter of an American millionaire.

He saw, however, an opportunity to fortify himself against Bettina's rejection, and he availed himself of it. It

was not his nature to let a chance for future profit go unnoticed; therefore, when Bettina avoided him, he sought out Marion and tried by every wile of his resourceful nature to create in her a genuine liking for him. Marion as a poor girl would have been intolerable, but Marion as the possessor of a great fortune was decidedly worth cultivating. Should he by any unhappy chance lose Bettina, his turning to her friend would be neither crude nor surprising.

His manner toward Marion was perfect. There was no suggestion of a sentimental interest; he was too accurate in his reading of people to make such a mistake. He met her candor with candor, her friendliness with a friendliness equally free from the sex note—and found that he was making headway. There was no longer the old mocking look in her eyes; at least the mockery was without a sting. She went out less with that extraordinary young person, the secretary. Diadoti gave this same secretary much thought—his position in the house; F. D.'s open regard for him; Marion's preference, which she took no pains to conceal; even Bettina's manner changed when he was about.

Diadoti did not underestimate Pendleton; he went rather to the other extreme. The sight of the secretary annoyed him, and he was haunted by a fear that somehow Pendleton stood in his way, either through his influence with Mr. Lodge or in some way that involved Bettina. Perhaps he could have defined his feelings more clearly had he seen more of the young man; as it was, for days at a time the two men did not come within speaking distance. Pendleton was never at Seawash for dinner, seldom for lunch. He answered F. D.'s letters, gave the servants their orders for the day, and spent the rest of the time in the gray racer or aboard the *Clara* with Captain Baker.

Diadoti left Wednesday night to catch his steamer, which was to sail early the next morning.

Bettina was very kind to him on the day of his leaving. They drove in the afternoon behind her father's mare, and came as near an understanding as her bargain with F. D. permitted. They returned for dinner, and later Bettina and her father drove the count to the station to catch the nine-thirty train.

But Diadoti said his real good-by to Bettina in the music room while Ferdinand D. waited outside in the car. He kissed her hand fervently and prayed the gods to aid his cause.

"When I return to America, may it be to claim you as my countess," he said.

His choice of words was happy—had he said "wife" it would not have appealed to the girl as "countess" did—and Bettina smiled on him encouragingly, almost tenderly.

They were all very gay on the drive to the station. But when Diadoti had boarded his train and they turned homeward, Bettina breathed an unconscious sigh of relief. She told herself that it would be quite different when their engagement was a certainty. His attitude would change, and with it hers; there would not be his jealousy to combat, and she, having once made up her mind, would not allow her fancy to wander into forbidden fields. But for the present, it was good to have him gone.

F. D. spoke to the chauffeur, asking him to hurry, as the rain would soon be on them.

"Rain to-night?" Bettina asked.

"Yes, look at that sky. It's quite threatening. Nothing but a shower, though, I guess."

No other word passed between them. Of late they had found it difficult to talk. Bettina missed the old frank outbursts, scarcely recognizing, in this

mild, silent man, the ready tongue and quick temper of her father.

At Seawash she found Marion and Pendleton in the music room. She went in without knocking, expecting to find the room vacant. Her first glance showed her that she had come at an awkward moment.

Marion was on the piano seat, her back to the instrument, facing Pendleton, who was standing by the fireplace looking down at her. There was a tenseness in the atmosphere that Bettina felt at once, and her first impulse was to withdraw; then she decided that it would only add to the awkwardness of the situation.

The room was lighted by a lamp on the piano. Its glow fell on Marion's head. Pendleton's face was in shadow, but the light caught his hands, and Bettina saw that they were tightly clenched and that the veins bulged as she had seen them once before.

When he saw her, he shifted his position. Marion spoke.

"Home, Betty?"

"Yes; we hurried on account of the rain."

"We can't have perfect weather always." Marion was making an effort to keep her voice matter of fact, but Bettina caught a new vibrant quality in it.

"Father wants to know if you two will play bridge," Bettina said.

Marion rose. "I should like to, Betty, but I have business letters hanging over me. Ask the colonel to excuse me." As she spoke, she went toward the door.

Pendleton hurried over to open it for her.

"Good night, Pendleton," she said.

"Good night," he answered in an even voice.

The door closed behind her, and Bettina dropped down on the piano seat. She was puzzled and curious; she had

stumbled on a scene. Marion had been excited, Pendleton embarrassed.

"We wished you were with us, Mr. Harper," she said to detain him. "In his hurry to get home, Arthur nearly lost control of the car."

"I wish I had been with you." The words were commonplace, but there was an intensity in his wish that was quite out of keeping with its importance.

Bettina wondered whether he wished he had not had the talk with Marion that she had interrupted. Had he declared his love for Marion? He had known her only a short time, but F. D. had predicted that they would be great friends; and from the first Marion had encouraged him. It was foolish of him to take her seriously or to presume on her friendliness. For the past few days they had not been together so much; perhaps Marion had realized what construction he was putting on her unconventional treatment of him. It was stupid of him, and Bettina had thought him so different—so impersonal and hard to understand. But like every other man, he had been caught by the first woman who half tried.

Thinking these things, Bettina stared thoughtfully ahead of her, while Pendleton went to the window and looked out at the night.

The sky was black. A sudden flash of lightning cut the blackness, a peal of thunder followed, and down came the rain. Bettina heard it strike the driveway. A sharp wind blew through the open window. It chilled her, and the sight of Pendleton standing by the window looking out at the storm, unconscious of her presence, oppressed her. She wanted to call out to him sharply.

"Sometimes life is a beastly business."

As he spoke, another flash came; it illuminated his face, showing it drawn and suffering.

Before she could answer, there was a knock at the door, and Jordan came in to close the windows.

Pendleton turned to her. "It's cooler. Shall I get you a scarf?" His voice was natural, but his eyes were haggard.

"No, thank you. I'm going upstairs. Give father Marion's message, please."

He held open the door for her, and as she passed into the hall, some impulse made her turn. "I'm sorry if things have gone wrong," she said simply.

"You're very good," he answered, and she remembered that she had used those exact words to him a short time before.

She went upstairs, feeling depressed and uneasy. Her wish was to go to Marion, but she was afraid her visit would be a breach of tact. She undressed and tried to read, but her mind refused to occupy itself with the page before her. It was a relief when a tap came at her door and Marion entered. She was still in evening dress; her face was calm, though a little pale.

"Some rain," she said.

"Yes. After six dry weeks, we need it."

"Betty," Marion said, coming over and sitting down on the foot of the couch, "I'm going away to-morrow, and I want you to square it with the colonel."

"Going away? Marion, you promised to stay until Janie came."

"I know—but—Well, Janie is coming four days earlier than I expected, and I want to get the house open for her."

"Marion, that isn't the reason! Something went wrong to-night—"

"You noticed it when you came in, old sharp eyes." Marion's mouth twisted into a little smile.

"As your hostess, I feel responsible for anything unpleasant that happens to you."

"Well, nothing unpleasant happened."

"I know better, but that is no reason for your going. He has tact. Tomorrow you won't know that it happened." Marion made an impatient gesture. "It was very annoying," Bettina went on; "but really, dear, you have yourself to blame. I don't want to preach, but—"

"What are you talking about, Bettina Lodge?" Marion demanded.

"You can't put me off like that. You know you encouraged him. You may not have meant it, but men don't always understand. I know I'm perfectly platitudinous, but I want you to see that if he has fallen in love with you, it isn't a tragedy, but the inevitable comedy."

"Oh, Betty, what a blind old dear you are! You have things just completely turned around. I didn't mean to tell you, but I can't let you go on misjudging the boy."

"You mean—"

"That I have done the impossible. I thought I couldn't care and maybe I don't now, but I've come mighty close to it." Marion's eyes met Bettina's bravely.

"Marion!"

"Don't be conventional, Betty. Women fall in love, just as men do, only women of our class are so full of vanity and pretense— Perhaps I have my share, but I am tremendously proud that I am big enough to say I care for a man who doesn't care for me."

"Marion, dear!"

"Don't feel sorry for me, Betty. I'm all right, but I want to get away."

"But how do you know he doesn't—" Bettina asked.

"Because he told me so—or as good as told me. We were talking, and I said that I thought he would make a fine doctor. He said he loved the work, but he had let his chance slip. Then

I asked him to marry me and give himself the chance."

"Oh!" Bettina gasped.

Marion laughed. "Oh!" she repeated. "Why not! What is my stupid old money for? Well, you can imagine how I upset him. You know how he would hate to hurt any one. And then to be rude, as he thought, to a woman! Poor dear, I think I aged him five years. That's why I want to go away. I could stay and forget all about it, but he would torture himself trying to make it up to me."

"But, Marion, he couldn't have accepted. He has nothing, and you so much," Bettina put in.

"Don't talk rot, Betty. What has Diadoti? Nothing, and you have so much."

"But he—"

"Don't spring that title thing on me, Betty. It's just about as much good as his dilapidated castle and his debts. Your money can make all three all right, but as they stand, they are— You know what I think of those needy noblemen. Pendleton has everything to offer a woman—youth, health, character—I won't speak of appearance; that is unessential—and he is quite capable of earning a living and don't you forget it." She spoke vehemently.

Bettina listened, her lips set, her face pale with anger. She had never had the truth thrust home to her in such a way. She was hurt in the depths of her nature—her pride wounded, her vanity crushed.

"Your enthusiasm for one man makes you discourteous to another," she said frigidly.

"Oh, Betty, I'm sorry, dear! I wouldn't have hurt your feelings for the world!" Marion's grief was genuine. "You know, Betty, I think no one is good enough for you. I didn't mean to be catty. Please forgive me—not now, but when you think it over." She went toward the door, then turned.

"Betty, be good to Pen, won't you? I upset him frightfully."

"Marion, dear," Bettina said, going over to her, "I am sorry, sorry that it happened!"

"I know you are, but don't let it worry you. I shan't. I have Janie and a lot of other things to worry about. You won't mind my going to-morrow?"

"Not if you want to."

"And you won't let the colonel suspect?"

"No."

"Thanks. I don't want him to misjudge the boy. He isn't in the least to blame."

Bettina put her arms about her friend. "You are too fine for words, Marion."

"Nonsense! Good night, Betty, and don't fret. I am not a bit lovelorn." She laughed as she left the room.

Bettina stood where Marion had left her. Pendleton's face came to her and his words: "Life is a beastly business." Marion was right; he was terribly upset. She felt sorry for him—sorry for Marion, too; but somehow her old sense of depression was gone. She said to herself:

"He is different. He is fine—honest—tender—"

A feeling of joy struggled with her pity for Marion. She heard the raindrops on the windowpane, but their sinister note was gone; they beat now a merry tattoo, and against her will her spirit grew light, happy. She crept into bed and dropped into a deep, dreamless sleep.

CHAPTER XI.

When Bettina got downstairs the next morning, she found Marion at the desk in the library. They greeted each other as if the talk of the night before had not taken place. Marion was bright and fresh looking, and Bettina

was like her old self after a night of unbroken sleep.

"The colonel and Pen went off early this morning on the *Clara*. I am leaving notes for them."

"You really want to go?"

"Yes, I would have to go any way to-morrow, to get things ready for Janie. She gets home Saturday."

Bettina drove her friend over to catch the noon train. Upon her return to Seawash she spent a busy afternoon answering letters. She felt light-hearted, and caught herself humming as she wrote. The stillness of the house, the surety of no interruption, the prospect of a quiet dinner with her father and possibly his secretary, were soothing to her nerves and calming to her spirit after the strain of the past weeks. It even was a relief to have Marion gone, though she reproached herself for her disloyalty to her friend.

Ferdinand D. and Pendleton got home before sundown, and Bettina met them on the south veranda. She watched the two men cross the lawn, the light, elastic step of her father and his erect figure showing how well he bore his sixty-three years. His hat was off and the sun touched his white hair and fine, open face. She felt a sudden rush of tenderness for him. The younger man, taller by two inches than Lodge, trailed behind, playing with the dogs, who had rushed out to meet him and were now barking and making affectionate springs at him. He wore the usual white sweater, possibly the one that had protected her the afternoon they had visited the Frenchman's poppy garden.

"We had a fine day, Betty," F. D. said, "and the captain made a great catch. Pen and I are poor fishermen."

"To-morrow I'm going with you, if I'm wanted," she said.

"That's good news." He bent down and kissed her as he passed on his way to the library. "Where's Marion?"

"Gone," Betty said, without looking at Pendleton. She could feel that he was very still, waiting for her next words. "She had a wireless calling her home. Janie gets here four days earlier than she had expected. She left notes for you two." For the first time she glanced at the secretary.

He was looking at her steadily, as if he were trying to decide whether she had given the real reason of Marion's flight.

"Too bad!" F. D. said. "We shall miss her. I'll hand your note out to you, Pen."

"Thanks. I've got to take these fellows to the kennels. You are ready for your supper, aren't you, old man?" He looked down at the dog whose loving, anxious eyes were fastened on him. For answer Tim barked joyfully.

"Here you are, Pen." F. D. said as he handed a large, square envelope out of the window.

Pendleton hurried to get it and put it into his pocket without a word. Bettina thought his face flushed, but the next moment he was smiling at her and making some remarks about the day's outing. Then he called the dogs and went on his way to the kennels.

The three met at dinner. F. D. regretted Marion's absence, the other two joined him, and thereafter there was no mention of her name.

After dinner Bettina played for them. Her father sat in the library, smoking, while Pendleton drew a low chair near the piano.

The shaded lamp on the piano threw its glow over Bettina, revealing her delicate, high-bred beauty. The music softened her face and made her eyes sweet and luminous. She glanced his way and smiled when he asked for more music. She thought how different he looked from last night when she had stumbled on him and Marion. His face then had been hard and his eyes haggard; now he was the picture

of serenity and content. His position showed the full length of his long, slender figure; the charm of the tanned face rising above the black and white of his evening clothes stood out clearly in the high light on it; the strong hands lay passive on the arms of the chair.

"Play the Debussy piece—the one about the garden in the rain."

"*'Jardins sous la pluie'?* You like it?"

"It's a jolly, fascinating thing—and I like to see your fingers on the keyboard as you do it."

"And I thought it was pure love of Debussy!"

She began, and he looked at her fingers so discreetly that she was not disconcerted. She played it with technical skill and with an appreciation of the picturesqueness of the description. When she had finished, he asked for another, but she shook her head.

"I have played myself out. Besides, I have a letter to get off to Marion. She left half of her things here." She spoke deliberately, intending to remove the idea that Marion was a tabooed subject for all time.

"We shall miss her, shan't we? She is very fine—but of course you know that," he said.

"Yes, she is a very big woman."

"Yes, big," he repeated with sincerity.

The next day Bettina spent on the water with Pendleton and Captain Baker. Her father was called to the city by an early telegram. He urged her not to forego her outing; he knew that it would benefit her—put a little color into her cheeks. It wasn't like his Betty to be pale; she had had too much company; she needed quiet and rest. He was more like her father than he had been for weeks past and she was grateful for the change. She kissed him good-by, feeling that the old intimate relation between them had been reestablished.

The day on the *Clara* was a day of sun and laughter, of spirited talk and long silences.

The days that followed it were like it in quality. Bettina felt that she had never before known the possibilities of a summer at Seawash. The old round of luncheons, dinners, dances, and tennis teas was stupid and profitless, but these long outings with her father and Pendleton filled the days with pleasure and the nights with sleep. Her eyes grew brighter; the old color came back. It did F. D.'s heart good to hear her laugh so often and so unaffectedly.

The only one who moved through the time unchanged was Pendleton. He smiled his old friend-acquiring smile, laughed with Bettina, and proved an expert in devising entertainment. The personal flavor added to an experience, giving it a quality of rareness and sweetness—the ability to make an adventure vivid and full of significance—this was his gift; not one of the intellect, but a faculty rising from the depths of intuition and flowering in the serenity of his well-balanced nature.

August passed and the first week of September. In another three weeks Seawash would be closed and the town house opened for the winter season. In three weeks, too, Bettina must reach her decision concerning Diadoti.

Sometimes she thought of the count, generally after the receipt of an anxious, ardent letter, but she put the thought away, saying to herself that the present was to be lived and that it in no way bore on her future. At other times the thought of a separation from her father and his life frightened and saddened her. Her old jealousy of Pendleton was gone; she was glad that he would be with F. D. She wondered whether he knew of her prospective marriage, and whether he approved, or whether he was as prejudiced as her father had been against Diadoti.

This was in her mind when he joined her one day at the luncheon table. She was alone, F. D. having gone to the city to attend a directors' meeting. Bettina had spent the morning thinking and was growing morbid.

"Busy this afternoon?" Pendleton asked.

"No—why?"

"Thought you might come out in my new boat." He smiled at her proudly.

"Have you one?" she asked.

"Yes, a wonder—a speed boat—just room enough in it for two. The colonel gave it to me for a birthday present. He shouldn't have done it, but you know how he is."

"Is this your birthday? Why didn't you say so? We might have celebrated."

"That's what I want to do this afternoon if you will come out with me."

"I should like to. Where are you going?"

"I'm going to try to make Black Bluff in two hours."

"You must have a fast boat!" she said.

"I've been testing her this morning. Do you think you could stand the speed?"

"I'm sure I could, and I'd love the excitement."

"She's stanch and seaworthy, or I wouldn't ask you."

At two o'clock they started. The *Nitteba* took to the water like an old salt, and raced daintily out to her course. Reaching it, Pendleton opened her up. She jumped and her bow left the water and hung in the air as they flew along.

Pen sat in his pit, half covered by the small deck, his eyes strained ahead, his hand controlling the motor surely, deftly. Bettina, in her big coat in the low stern seat, closed her eyes and let the wind whip her face and inflate her lungs. It left her no time for thought, only for feeling. She felt that she was

racing, racing almost with life, with every chance to beat the old fellow.

Once Pen turned to see how she was standing the speed. She answered: "I love it—for a while at least."

It was all that passed between them until they reached Black Bluff.

"Ten minutes ahead of time!" he shouted, as the *Nitteba* came alongside of a little pier at the foot of the bluff.

He leaped out and held out his hand to her. She was stiff and tired after her cramped position in the boat.

"There's a little German café up there where we can get some fairly good coffee." He pointed to an unpretentious house at the top of the bluff, then took her arm to help her up the steep pathway.

"I'm afraid I shouldn't have brought you. Your lips are blue; you are cold."

"I shall be fine after the coffee. The very word is encouraging."

"I'm sure they couldn't give you decent tea."

"I don't want any tea. I feel that I have had enough this summer to last my lifetime."

"Well, we'll have coffee, good, strong coffee."

At the top of the bluff they found several tables on the porch of the red house, and Bettina wanted to stay outside where there was a view of the sea.

He placed a chair for her and went in search of a waiter. A few minutes later, fragrant, steaming coffee was before them and some very sweet German cake. They gulped down the hot drink and devoured the cake; the wind had sharpened their appetites beyond the fastidious stage.

From their seats on the porch they could look far out over the water. It shimmered in the sunlight—not the sunlight of a month ago, but a tenderer, softer light that caressed the sea—and a breeze with the first touch of autumn in it fanned the porch. The little red house was the only building

on the point; it stood high and isolated. A hundred yards to the rear was a straggling fishing village.

Several red-cheeked children passed and stared at them, and an old fisherman, smoking a strong pipe, came out of the house and doffed his cap to them.

"We take it slow going home, so we must be off," Pen said after a long pause.

She rose, shaking off the happy, dreamlike mood that had wrapped her about. They stood for a moment on the top step. It commanded a wide view of the scene before them. Down below the bluff were numerous sail-boats and several motor crafts; the *Nitteba* danced at her anchorage; and the water, blue and white-crested, stretched out as far as the eye could reach until a golden line marked the horizon, where rose the blue vault that seemed to lift and lift until overhead the unfathomableness of it stunned the eye. The man and woman stood taking into their memories for all time the matchless beauty of the day. They turned instinctively to each other, touched by a desire to share it. The next moment she moved down the steps and he followed.

At the water's edge she asked: "Where did you get the queer name for your boat?"

"Do you think *Nitteba* queer?" he asked. "Spell it backward and see what you get."

She looked at the brass plate, puzzled, then laughed.

"Well, really—"

"You don't mind?"

"No, I'm flattered. How did you think it out?"

"Isn't there an old saying about a will and a way?"

"I think so, but you will have to ask father. He has a profound knowledge of proverbs."

"He doesn't live by them. He has

made his own pattern as he has gone along."

"He's a remarkable man," she said, in a burst of tenderness for her absent father.

"He's all that and more."

"You have enthusiasms for people, haven't you?"

"Why shouldn't I?"

"Certainly, if you can——"

"Can't you?"

The boat was moving slowly, smoothly through the water. Bettina paused before answering him. "I'm afraid I expect too much. You do not—you're fundamentally indifferent. If you didn't get, you wouldn't care."

"Indifferent—do you think I am?" he asked, with naïve wonder.

She laughed. "Yes, I think so, don't you?"

"I should say 'no,' but one's opinion of one's self isn't worth much."

"The other fellow's opinion of one isn't worth much more."

"Yet we go on living by them. We are a queer lot," he said, with a laugh.

"A sorry lot sometimes."

"Oh, I say! You can't expect me to be pessimistic when the *Nitteba* has behaved so beautifully."

"I wish I had your capacity for enjoyment."

"You have," he said more seriously, "though you may not realize it. You see, for a long time you have pretended that simple things were bores, but in reality you like this just as I do—this little boat close to the water, the sea smell, the sun. Now aren't they heaps finer, saner, than all the complex relations and attitudes that we ball life up with when we have too much money?"

"Perhaps, but you are instinctively simple——"

"No, I am not. What I have is due to a lot of cultivation. I had plenty of time for that out in Arizona. You see, I was suddenly hurled from a padded way of life into close contact with

a group of rough, direct, earnest workingmen. I had to adapt myself to my new surroundings, so I stripped off the trappings of the life I had led when I spent wildly money I had never earned and got down to the fact that the only aristocracy is the aristocracy of the fine spirit. I'm no good talking about these things, analyzing myself or other people—I can't draw subtle or fine distinctions—but I get things instinctively; and, from the first, I knew that you belonged to 'the aristocracy.'"

"But I have fallen away, you mean?" she said thoughtfully.

"I never said that."

"But you think it," she insisted.

He looked at her for a moment, then shook his head. "You aren't a good guesser." Then, changing his tone, he added: "You know, if ever I have a honeymoon, I'm going to spend it in a motor boat."

"The *Nitteba* would accommodate a restricted honeymoon."

"Oh, a larger boat, a yacht if I can afford it—no, that would be too large. There's something so romantic about the water—it's so intimate."

"Possibly the removal from one's kind——"

"Exactly! Just you and she alone under the friendly stars, poking your nose in and out of the coast line, down shady rivers—— By Jove, it would be great! I'm glad I thought of it."

"You've decided to have one?" she said.

"Oh, I haven't lost hope yet. Don't you think it would be great?"

"It might be."

"It might be. Of course, it wouldn't be perfect like this, because you won't be there, and the other girl might not like the shady rivers and the friendly stars. And if she did, I should be thinking of you shut up in an Italian castle."

"Pen—don't——"

"I'm sorry. I didn't mean it. I did

mean it," he added after a moment, "but I shouldn't have said it."

They spoke no more. The spell was broken; they could not return to the old banter; they felt the uselessness of going on in commonplaces.

They reached Seawash. He tied up the boat and followed her across the lawn and into the library. She took her mail from the table and started toward the door. He went over to open it and stood with his back to it, facing her.

"I'm sorry if I spoiled your afternoon. Won't you take it as just a bit of foolish pleasantry? Shake hands and say you forgive me!" He held out his hand to her.

She hesitated, then placed her hand in his.

"Now, look up and say it," he said gayly, holding her little cold hand in his warm one.

"I—I understood—" She tried to meet his tone with one equally gay, but her voice failed. She raised her eyes to his.

"Bettina—dear—"

"Oh, Pen, don't—" We mustn't—" She snatched her hands away, opened the door, and fled upstairs.

In her room her first impulse was to look at her face in the mirror. She expected to find it changed—it was; she had never seen herself so beautiful, so touched with spirit. Her face was pale, the lines showed firm and sharp in outline. Her eyes were large and, lighted by a great, new emotion, burned as steadily, as keenly, as had Pen's. She drew her breath in sharply.

On the desk lay a letter from Diadoti. She noticed the foreign paper, the Italian stamp. She seized it, tore it into two pieces, and tossed them away. The next moment she dropped on her knees by the couch and buried her face in the pillow to stifle the sobs that shook her.

CHAPTER XII.

The great house was deserted save for Bettina and the servants. Ferdinand D. had not returned from the city and Pendleton had stayed for supper with the Bakers. Bettina dined alone and afterward wandered about the lower floor, restless, anxious, waiting for something, she scarcely knew what.

A light burned in the hall, the library and music room were dark except for the moonlight that shone through the open windows.

Tired from her wanderings, Bettina went to the piano, and for a while the music seemed the thing she had been seeking. It soothed her nerves and calmed her spirit. But as she played on, a curious idea came to her that each composer was trying to say the same thing—that underlying all joy, all triumph, all beauty, was pain—unescapable, lurking in somber chords, running neck and neck with rippling scales, and in a simple chanson of Tschaikowsky's rising like a mist from the warm loveliness of the melody. She rose abruptly and went to the window that led on to the veranda.

It was another moon-drenched night, a soft breeze bore the scent of roses from the garden. She stretched out her arms—the music, the night, the roses, all seemed aspects of one great, painful beauty that, by reaching out, she might grasp and hold to her.

It was a strange, excited mood—a new experience—and it followed the restless, disturbed days that had passed since her trip to Black Bluff. For two days after that she had avoided Pendleton, feeling hot and resentful toward him. This mood had been replaced by an eager desire to see him, to hear him speak, to know what he was thinking and how he felt. She had no longer avoided him, but he had made no effort to be with her, and a

heavy, aching mood had settled on her. She had awakened each morning feeling the oppression of the coming uneventful day; at night she had slept after long wakeful hours—a sleep that was fitful and haunted by dreams.

After a week of these changing moods, this new one of exaltation, of something approaching peace, was deeply welcome.

For some time she stood at the window, looking out at the night, inhaling the fragrance of the rose garden. She moved out on the veranda. There another odor reached her, and, glancing toward the library window, she saw smoke curling out and rising in the clear air. Some one was smoking in the dark room. It must be Pendleton, though she had not heard him come in, and the door between the library and music room stood open.

She turned from the night and went to the French window that opened into the library.

"When did you get in?" Her voice was vibrant from the mood that was on her.

"I've been in half an hour. Why did you stop playing?"

"It seemed inadequate," she said from her position by the window. She could not see him, but from his voice she knew that he was sitting in the corner between the front and side windows; the projection of the fireplace hid him from view.

"Inadequate? I thought you said everything."

"About what?" She came into the room. "Please don't get up. You are so well settled."

She stood by the fireplace, her head against the mantel. The moonlight from the front window played over her lifted face and white throat. The trailing gown against the dark background showed the outline of her slender figure. He had never seen her so lovely, so appealing.

"What did the music say—that I was happy?" she asked wistfully.

"No, that you were anxious, eager, seeking. Then you went off into a dream and you waked up, afraid."

"I didn't know you had so much imagination."

"I haven't."

"Then how—"

"A long time ago I told you that I understood," he said.

"I wonder?" Then, after a moment's pause: "Are you going to stay on with father?"

"Oh! How do you mean?"

"I mean is it permanent—your being with him—or just until Boggs returns?"

"You want me to go?"

"No," she said quickly. "I hope you will stay with him always. He cares for you, and I should like to think of your being with him when—when—"

"When you are gone? Is that what you mean?" He had risen and was standing before her. The wide window was between them, he in the shadow, and she where the moonlight fell on her loveliness.

"I was thinking of that—yes," she said slowly.

"So you have decided?"

"What?"

"That you are going to Italy to live?"

"I suppose I have." There was a pause and she told herself that he had no right to ask her such a question. She should snub him, but she wanted to know what he thought. She wanted him to reproach her, drive her to defend her position. "You think I am wrong?" she asked, to provoke him.

"How can you do it?"

"Why—"

"You have tried to make yourself believe that the position you will gain will make up to you for other things, but it won't. As a man of his class, he may be all right, but he is not a man as you have been trained to think of

men. He is a mass of traditions and superstitions and small, warping pursuits and desires. He makes you believe that you are subtle, exotic, a world-weary woman. You aren't—you are young, sweet, free of mind and strong of body. You are clean, dauntless—you aren't suited to a European hothouse. Bettina—" He caught her gently by the shoulders and looked down into her face.

She stood still in his grasp, unable to shake it off. Her heart was beating wildly.

"Bettina, how can you, when you love me?" he asked suddenly.

"I don't—" she cried, and tried to throw his hands off, but he held her arms in a tight grasp.

"You do, just as I love you. The day we came home from Black Bluff, we knew. Since then we have fought it out. I have tried as hard as you, Bettina, to conquer it. I thought I—I had. But when you spoke of going away, I lost my head. I love you, Bettina." His voice was very low; his hands slipped down her arms until they reached her hands; he took them in his. "I love you." He raised the little hand that lay in his to his lips and kissed it tenderly.

She lifted her face to him, wanting to speak, but the words wouldn't come.

"You aren't going away—you can't!"

"I must," she whispered. "I've planned and built on it. I can't give it up now."

"Do you realize?"

"Yes."

"You love me?"

"I don't—and if I do," she said desperately, "love is little in the stretch of life."

"It is everything," he said.

"I don't believe it—not with me. Other things are stronger. Love doesn't fill life—it is a transient thing. Life and its business go on."

"That is the cheap sophistry of your circle."

"That may be, but I believe it."

"You are trying to make yourself believe."

"I believe it—I can't help it—can't help it if my mind acts, rather than my emotions."

"But it doesn't. You are fighting down your strongest, your best feeling. But listen." He drew her close to him, his face was near hers, she could look straight into his eyes. "Listen, Bettina. It isn't that I ask anything of you. If I were in a position to do that, I wouldn't leave this to your judgment—I'd take you by force—"

"We're in the twentieth century," she said, fighting to get control of the talk between them.

"We are the same old men and women. Bettina, you only know life from your cotton wrapping. You don't know what a hideous thing it is to love one man and marry another. It's awful!"

"I don't love you! You have no right— Your old success with women has blinded you."

"Don't say such things to me," he said impatiently. "There is only you. There has never been any one else but you."

"I won't hear," she said desperately. "Let go my hands! I am practically engaged. You are dishonorable!"

"I refuse to be bound by rotten ethics. I owe him nothing. I am thinking of you—your future. That's all that counts." His voice was low, persuasive, his eyes tender; his hands held hers in a strong grip.

In her soul the battle raged. She loved him, and this great, new emotion fought with her patiently built-up attitude toward life—the desire for place and power. Everything was against her, she cried to herself—the night, the voice of the man, his eyes, and this great, new emotion.

"Bettina!" he said again.

She closed her eyes to shut him out; her body swayed; she was weak and faint and relaxed. His arms went about her.

"Bettina!" he whispered.

Her face lifted to him and his lips bent to hers. For one fragile, marvelous second the very pulse of time stopped for them. Then Bettina broke from him, backed away, looking at him with reproachful, indignant eyes.

"How could you?" she cried. "How dare you?"

"I had every right," he answered.

"You had no right—you knew I was engaged, and you used every trick—every wile."

"Bettina, you don't know what you say!"

"I do know! I don't love you—I hate you for the shame, the—" All the sweetness was gone and rage held her, rage that she had been swerved from her purpose. "You mistook my friendliness—"

"You've said enough," he cut in. "I was mistaken. You don't care—you can't care, and I have loved a woman who never lived—certainly not the real you."

"I don't care for your opinion of me," she said haughtily.

He laughed, a mirthless, hard laugh that cut through her self-appreciation and made her feel small and powerless.

"Of course you don't. You wanted to play a safe game; you wanted excitement without danger. I was to be caught, you to escape; I was supposed to content myself with respectful, adoring glances and to live in heaven when I accidentally touched your arm. Bah! You wanted to play with love as if it were a bangle, but you can't—you are caught just as I am—you love me just as I love you."

"I shall have forgotten this whole episode by to-morrow!"

He laughed again, his scorn and disbelief undisguised. "You can deny

your love and debase your womanhood, but you will never forget this night. You will never forget that I have kissed you. Neither shall I." His voice was clear, sharp, decisive. He stood in the moonlight, outwardly serene.

With his words ringing in her ears, Bettina went upstairs. Her anger was gone; she was stilled, she was afraid.

CHAPTER XIII.

Later she heard the motor that brought her father from the station; she heard him call: "Pen," as the car reached the house, the sound of their voices on the veranda, of the car on its way to the garage. Then there was silence. They were in the library, doubtless. She was grateful that F. D. had been away from home and glad that she would not have to see him until she had recovered her poise. Beyond this, she had no feeling. The events of the evening had passed with such rapidity that she felt dazed, like one in a dream.

She sent Mathilde off to bed. She thought there was curiosity and eagerness in her maid's eyes, and she wanted to be alone to think things out. But she couldn't think; she saw pictures, detached, unrelated—moonlight in the room, herself at the piano, his arms about her; and always she heard his last words, hideous, bitter, stinging words. But they weren't true, Bettina said over and over to herself, as she sat by the window and looked out at the sea. If her marriage to Diadoti was not wildly romantic, it was dignified, sensible, and inevitable.

As the night wore on, she grew cold from the sharp wind that blew in, and at length went wearily to her bedroom, wishing that she had not sent Mathilde off. The silence of the night oppressed her, and after the lights were out fear came. The moon filled the room with

shadows, and it seemed they were creeping closer and closer to her, that soon she would be infolded in a stifling, black embrace. She switched on the lights and tried to read, but her eyes would not take in the words before her.

Afterward she remembered that the night was full of restless roving from room to room, that there was a dull ache somewhere, and that she was afraid of the moon shadows. She could remember no thought of Pendleton or of the happenings of the evening. Toward morning sleep came, and with waking full realization; the mental and emotional apathy of the night before was gone. She went over and over the whole of Pen's stay in her father's house, and traced back to her first interest in him—the desire to get beneath his casual, indifferent exterior. Last night she saw, and the memory of it cut. She hated herself for her weakness. That she had flirted with him had to be admitted, but she had never meant it to go so far. It was shameful, but it was over. And crowding this assurance, came the memory of his arms about her and the kiss—the one moment that, her life through, would set a standard of ecstasy.

She dressed and went down to join her father. She found him alone in the library. He greeted her affectionately and told her of his trip to the city and the success of the meeting. She listened, apparently interested, but all the while waiting for the opening of a door or the sound of a whistle or the call of a familiar voice.

Later in the afternoon F. D. and his daughter motored down the beach to pay a visit. He made an effort to keep the talk between them going. Bettina wondered where Pendleton was. Her father made no reference to him, and yet this was the first outing since Marion's departure on which he had not accompanied them.

After studying her face for a long while, F. D. asked her about Diadoti. He saw the flash of revulsion in her face, but he did not stop his questions.

"In his last letter he had just returned from Rome. He saw the Wardlaws there," she said listlessly.

"Poor little man, it has been a hard summer for him," F. D. said kindly.

Bettina's face flushed with shame that her future husband should be referred to as a "little man"; she knew that her father was not thinking of his stature, but rather that his tone of kindly patronage expressed his real opinion of the Italian. She wondered whether others spoke of him as a "little man," or was it only her father's intense Americanism that led him to despise Diadoti and all that he represented? Marion had expressed herself freely on the subject; Pendleton had said, "He is not a man as you have been trained to think of men"—but he spoke through self-interest. Marion with her bitterness and her father with his prejudice were no better. She wanted some one who would give her an unbiased, disinterested opinion, show her where she was wrong or bolster up her courage if she were in the right. Why was every one against her, even her own silly emotions?

When they reached home, Pendleton was in the library. He spoke to her and then to F. D.

"Would you mind, colonel, if I ran into town to-night? Some old friends of mine from Charleston want me for dinner. I can't make that, but I can get there by nine."

"Go ahead, boy. Take to-morrow. There's nothing to do here."

"Thanks. Want anything in the city?"

"No."

"You, Miss Lodge?"

"Thank you, no," she said, in a low voice.

He was off, calling to Arthur to bring the car back in half an hour.

Bettina spent the next twenty-four hours trying to wipe from her memory all record of Pendleton and her association with him. She envied him his self-possession; his speech to her in the library before her father had been in his old spirit, with no suggestion of ill feeling or constraint. She had betrayed herself, and had caught F. D.'s eyes in a swift glance at her. For a moment she had thought it impossible to speak, though she had wanted to cry out that he shouldn't leave. She had wanted to say to her father: "If you let him go, he will never come back."

But he returned the next evening in time for dinner. His face was serene and he seemed in good spirits. He had been with old Charleston friends, the Heltons.

"Bob Helton was interested in your mines, colonel. That's all we talked about except hunting. They're on their way to their hunting lodge. Bob and I began together when we were tads, and 'e's kept it up."

"Wants you to come along, I bet."

"Oh, well, he knows I'm a working-man—— Colonel, your pardon."

"Don't be modest. Don't you think he ought to have a vacation, Bettina?"

She smiled and shook her head, refusing to commit herself. Nevertheless, when later in the evening F. D. quitted the library on a flimsy excuse, leaving her alone with Pendleton, she said: "You aren't going with the Heltons, are you?"

"Why not?"

"I don't want you to," she said.

"It's a week off. By that time you may have changed your mind," and he left the room without giving her a chance to answer.

She rose from her chair and looked after him. It was the blow that she had needed. The covert charge that she changed her mind constantly, the

absolute lack of courtesy and warmth, stung her into a fierce anger against him. The next day she went to the city.

CHAPTER XIV.

Bettina was in the city four days. She shopped feverishly, planning and ordering clothes for the season ahead of her. Each night she went to the theater and afterward to supper. She filled the days and crowded the evenings, and at the end of the fourth day was ready to return to Seawash, feeling that Pendleton had been uprooted from her interest for all time. She felt an immeasurable gratitude that the uprooting had been accomplished with so little emotional laceration.

She was sure now that she had suffered from a madness engendered by an idle summer. What had appeared a tragedy was, as she had told Marion, "the inevitable comedy," and now she could treat it as a comedy is meant to be treated—with laughter. In less than two weeks she would give her father her decision, and her engagement to Diadoti would be announced. Now she was in favor of an early spring wedding, just after Easter possibly. She and Mathilde took the train that would get them home by luncheon time, and wired her father to meet her.

Settled comfortably on the train, she went over her list of friends, to select the wedding attendants, and found it an absorbing subject. It broke the tedium of the trip. She had gone over this road so often that there was nothing new or interesting to be seen from the car window, especially now that the sun was hidden behind heavy gray clouds. But Bettina's thoughts were cheerful and refused to be influenced by the gathering gloom without. She felt brave, hopeful, almost happy; and when Mathilde said that she hoped they would reach home before the storm

broke, she smiled and said: "A little wind and rain won't hurt us."

As she stepped from the train, a cold, sharp gust of wind struck her, and a whirl of dust hid her father and the machine from sight.

With Mathilde at her side, she paused, trying to see ahead. Then she heard F. D.'s voice.

"You beat the storm, Betty. A bad one coming." He took her arm and hurried her to the waiting motor.

Arthur backed the car into the road, opened her up, and raced home. The wind was increasing every moment, the sea growing blacker. The whitecapped waves struck the shore with a hissing sound; the spray broke over the embankment and flicked their faces. It was turning cold, and Bettina huddled close to her father for warmth. As they turned into the driveway, the storm broke in its fury. The blackened sky was cut by zigzags of lightning; the thunder pealed terrifically—it seemed close over their heads—and a great, wind-driven rain dashed to the earth, smiting them sharply as it came.

Ferdinand D. helped Bettina and her maid to alight, and the three hurried into the house. Bettina got upstairs, wet to the skin and with chattering teeth. With Mathilde's assistance, she was soon in dry clothes, sitting before the fire that burned brightly in her room.

"I never saw a storm come so quick," Mathilde said.

"Listen to it now," Bettina answered.

The rain dashed against the windowpanes; the wind gibbered like a witch about the house corners; out on the lawn the trees swayed to the earth. Bettina went to the front window. The sea showed black and fearsome through the rain. She shivered and returned to the fire.

She lunched in her room. The lower part of the house was cold, and her

father sent word by Jordan that she had better stay in her own rooms.

The afternoon wore on. The rain stopped, but the wind increased in force. It reminded Bettina of an attacking army. She could hear it a long way off, growing in volume until, with a bellow, it struck the house. Then it broke and died away in low wailing. About four o'clock, the sky brightened and in the west a long, sinister, yellow line showed. Soon afterward night came on.

Bettina lay on her couch by the window, watching the deepening gloom. It was still now, save for the wind, which moaned feebly. She heard the motor on the driveway. Curiosity impelled her to see who was going out in such weather. It was her father, wrapped in a greatcoat, a cap pulled over his ears, on the seat by the chauffeur. She wondered what was taking him out; he hated stormy weather. Why hadn't he spoken to her, sent some word that he was going out? Where was Pendleton? She stopped, a sudden sharp fear assailing her. Something was wrong, terribly wrong. He had kept her in her room all afternoon; he had not been near her— She rang for Mathilde.

"Tell Jordan I want to see him."

Mathilde hesitated as if she wanted to speak, and Bettina turned to look at her. The woman's face frightened her.

"What is wrong, Mathilde?" she asked.

"Nothing, Miss Bettina."

"Then why—why are you frightened?" She was frightened herself, cold and filled with a terrible foreboding.

"It's the storm, Miss Bettina. It always scares me."

"But that is—"

She was interrupted by a knock at the door, and, as Mathilde paused, Bettina flew to open it. It was Jordan.

"Miss Lodge, your father said he might be out late, and not to wait dinner, and he thought you'd better dine up here."

"Did father say where he was going?"

"No, miss."

"Pen—Mr. Harper—is he home?" she asked.

"No, he went out in his boat early this morning, and it was a bad storm for a little boat. God have mercy on him!" Jordan had forgotten her, forgotten his position; tears filled his eyes, his voice trembled with emotion. "I beg your pardon, miss." He bowed and left the room.

CHAPTER XV.

At midnight Ferdinand D. returned. Bettina heard the car before it turned into the drive. She had been at the window for three hours, watching for her father. Mathilde had followed her to the lower floor, slipped a wrap about her shoulders, and touched her hand, saying:

"You are cold, Miss Bettina."

"Thanks, Mathilde," she answered, without glancing from the window.

High in the heavens a pale moon rode, white clouds veiling sometimes for a few moments the steely light that illumined the night. The sea was calm, the wind down. It was all so still—the house, the out-of-doors; as still and cold as she was. The moon was cold; the water, she knew, was horribly cold. She drew her wrap about her, but it gave her no sense of warmth. Then her straining ears caught the sound of the approaching motor, and she hurried to the veranda to meet her father.

"Betty!" he cried, as he saw her. He sprang from the car and led her into the library. One glance at his face told her all. It was pale, sorrow-stricken. She had never seen him look old before.

"Father, tell me—please!"

"My dear, there is nothing to tell."

"But he—Pen—Don't you know anything?"

"I—I hope—We must hope. He is a strong man, a resourceful man. We may hear in the morning—good news."

"But it was such a storm and his boat so frail!"

"Little boats have the best chance sometimes."

"You're cheating yourself with words," she cried.

He sank into a chair without removing his coat. She stood by, looking at him with great, tortured, tearless eyes.

"Tell me where have you been—what have you been doing?" she asked, regardless of his fatigue and sorrow.

"I've been everywhere, Baker and I. We have started out all the coast life-savers, and every other boat we could get hold of. Baker has gone out himself—I wanted to go with him—"

"You should have gone."

"I couldn't help and I thought you needed me, Betty."

"Father—I—" A gasping sob stopped her.

F. D. rose from his chair and opened his arms. She crept to him like a little, hurt animal seeking a place of safety.

"Betty, my little Betty!" He folded her in a close embrace. Her head was on his shoulder, her body shaken by sobs that she could not control. He made no effort to stop her, he said no word; he only held her close and prayed God to help her. His own eyes were filled with tears, and his strong mouth quivered with this new grief added to his great loss. At length she conquered the sobs and was quiet. He kissed her gently on the forehead.

"I'm selfish as usual, Nandee," she said in a low voice.

"No, dear; no, dear," he said, as he placed her in a chair before the bright fire. "I must speak to Jordan."

"Yes, poor Jordan will want to know," she said, without looking up.

F. D. left the room, and, when he returned, she was at the window, looking out at the night.

"Betty?" he said gently.

She turned. "Tell me all you know. I can stand it now."

"There's so little. He went out this morning in the little boat——"

"The *Nitteba*—it was named for me. I always brought him grief, but he has evened the score—— Oh, father, I can't stand it!"

"Betty!" he said imploringly.

"I loved him. You knew it, didn't you, though I tried to hide it? I was going on my blind way hurting him

— I was hurting myself, too, but he didn't know. He thought——"

"Betty, listen. You must be a brave girl. God sends us nothing that we can't bear."

"I haven't your faith."

"You must have, Betty. I am an old man, dear. I need you to be brave."

It was the bracing word that she needed. She looked at him, saw that he was old, bowed with sorrow, pale and worn with hours of watching and directing the searchers. She went to him and put her arms about him.

"I am sorry, dear. I will try."

They waited through the long night by the library fire. Jordan came in often to replenish it, and in answer to F. D.'s wish that he go to bed, he shook his head and mumbled that he was quite wide awake. F. D. asked Bettina to go to her room and try to sleep, but she clung to him, and he said no more about it. Toward morning she was so still in her chair that he thought she slept a little.

He went to the window and watched the sun rise over the sea. It came up clear and golden over a world washed clean by the storm of the day before. He opened the window, and a gust of cool, fine air struck his face. The

warm days were gone—the wind had a touch of the coming winter. Across F. D.'s mind flashed the happy summer days that he had spent with his young secretary. That health, that strength, that beauty of body and nature—it seemed impossible that such vitality could in one moment be snuffed out like a candle in the wind. He felt that the personality of his friend persisted—somewhere. He pondered over the great mystery of death and the greater mystery of life. His little Bettina, lying there white, stricken—so short a time ago her head was high, she was sure of herself, of the life before her, and with one blow fate had crushed her.

Then he cursed himself for his part in it. How had he dared try to arrange her life? Had he left Pendleton out in Arizona, this tragedy would not now be tearing at her heartstrings. Some day he must tell her that he had brought Pendleton to Seawash hoping that he would divert her from the Italian marriage; that was the blunt truth—he had used the charm of the young man—— But he had meant well by the boy. He had known that they would love; they were meant for each other. He had sinned, but with such good intentions!

He turned to look at Bettina. She was not sleeping, but staring at him with somber eyes.

"Betty?" he said gently.

She made an effort to smile at him. "Isn't it strange, father?" she said. "Life, I mean. Four months ago we didn't know him, and now everything is gone with him."

"Betty, there's something I must tell you—some time."

"You needn't," she said slowly. "I think I have guessed it."

"That I brought him here?"

"Yes, I think in a way I have known it from the first—not really, but something in me knew, and it became clear

to me a little while ago. Since I have been sitting here, so much has grown clear, so much!"

"Betty, I meant it for your good."

"I know, I know," she said, "and perhaps it was— But this hurt, this hurt—here—" She clutched her throat convulsively.

"Bettina—my girl!" He came and knelt by her, and in the paleness of the early morning he was an old, grief-racked man.

She stroked his hair gently and smiled at him. "Don't mind. I'm glad he came, glad I care—glad—" And then the long night of agony struck her down; she fainted in his arms.

The day that followed brought them no news of Pendleton, but a letter came that added the last note to the tragedy. It was from Weston, F. D.'s lawyer, who had gone South to consult with Ned Rivers concerning the Harper plantation, which had been in litigation two years. Weston wrote that the appeal had been granted to reopen the case on the strength of new evidence. He had discovered the weakness of the Summers' claim and confidently expected a verdict that would restore to Pendleton his inheritance. He wrote:

There has been a vast deal of trickery and very poor handling of the case, though Mr. Rivers has done his best. As a matter of fact, the will in favor of Larry Summers and his wife is only a clever forgery, which Summers' long service as her agent made an easy matter. It was supposed to have been witnessed by two of her tenants; they are ready to swear that the will was not drawn up in their presence and that they were asked to sign it not by Mrs. Harper, but by the agent, Larry Summers. Have had down a handwriting expert, and will show that Mrs. Harper did not sign her name to this document. The former will has, of course, been destroyed, but as Mr. Harper is the next of kin, the property will come to him, once the Summers have been removed.

Ferdinand D. did not show this letter to Bettina, but he wrote Weston to

go on with the case and to spare neither time nor money to bring about a satisfactory result. And as he wrote the letter, a conviction came to F. D. that Pendleton would come back to them.

Bettina was not so full of faith, and two days later the last hope died out of her heart. Captain Baker picked up the *Nitteba*. He had found the little boat floating aimlessly about, being gradually drawn toward the open sea.

But Lodge continued his search. He received daily reports from the men in charge of the boats patrolling the coast. He offered large rewards for the body. He followed up every clew that came to his notice and was untiring in his efforts to make sure as to the fate of his young secretary.

The newspapers spread the news, and telegrams and letters came from old and new friends of the young man. Marion came down for a day, but Bettina found her presence almost unendurable. She could not speak of him, and Marion could talk of nothing else. It was a hard day for both, and Bettina was glad when her friend left her.

During these days her great comfort was Mathilde. The unremitting care, the unspoken sympathy, the motherliness, of the maid established a new and strong relation between the two women.

Since the first evening Bettina had been calm. She slept little; her mind was abnormally active, and sometimes she wondered if she were walking straight toward madness. Then she was sure that never in her life had her mind been so clear, so steady. Reviewing her life in this new clearness as if it were the life of another, she saw the pettiness that had stifled the good in her, the selfishness that had warped her spirit, the false sense of values that had estranged her from her father, made her "deny her love" and willing to "debase her womanhood."

Now it was all changed, everything seemed so small; power and place and possession mattered so little, so very little.

"Oh, God," she cried, the torture of her thoughts driving her at last to speech, "was it necessary to make the punishment so heavy?"

CHAPTER XVI.

Ten days went by. To-morrow they were going to the city, and Seawash would be closed for the season. Bettina wondered whether they would ever return. Could they, after the tragedy that had marred this summer?

She had been alone all evening. Her father was away, following some clew that might keep him out all night. Poor dear, he had followed so many clews in the last ten days! He had not told her, but the eager look in his eyes as he said good-by spoke of a new hope. But there was no hope in her; in the aching calm of her mind there was not enough vitality for hope. She went through the days dry-eyed and hopeless until physical and mental fatigue sent her off into a restless, tortured sleep.

But during this woeful time, a new ideal was shaping itself. The old life was dead; she must create a new one, one that would keep alive the qualities that had made him beloved—the thought of others, simplicity, gentleness, and courage. She remembered his courage, his ability to speak the right word, to render the right service. She would follow the pattern of his life.

These thoughts brought her some degree of peace; they took the terror out of the night; they brought hope, but they filled her with a longing to see him again, to hear him speak some word of forgiveness, of love. The inevitability of death struck her with new force and swept away the patiently built-up peace and hope. A wild paroxysm of grief laid hold of her, and

her spirit beat against the cold fact that she would never see him again. The night closed about her soul. She rose and wandered from room to room like a creature bereft of reason. Then, almost without thought, she threw a scarf about her and crept out into the hall. Silence and darkness were over the house. She felt her way along and turned down the transverse corridor, moving without fear, without hesitation, until she reached his door. There she paused a moment before turning the knob.

In Pendleton's deserted room one window was open, and a cold wind blew in. The moon was in its last quarter and gave scant light; heavy shadows were about her. A long, thin ray of light fell on a white object. She moved forward and touched the rough, woolly surface of a sweater. She seized it in her arms, and the clean, sun-dried odor greeted her as once before when she had slipped it on. She held it to her, burying her face in its roughness. Another odor reached her; she felt for the pocket and drew out a chiffon scarf—her own. It had the same fragrance that had driven him to say: "Girls are such wonderful things." She could see him again as they swung along the white road to the *Clara* on that golden summer day.

Involuntarily she dropped to her knees. She prayed clumsily, brokenly, but she prayed. Later, with the sweater in her arms, she left the room, closing the door behind her softly. Bettina was no longer rebellious, no longer hopeless; the grief was there still, but shot through with hope and a new purpose.

In her room she switched on the light, went to her desk, and wrote her answer to Diadoti. To-morrow her bargain with her father ended, and she was free to make her choice. She finished the letter, addressed and stamped it, but left it open for F. D. to read be-

fore he posted it—that would spare her talking about it. She knew the letter would bring her father the first happiness he had known since the day of the storm. There was a pang of pity for Diadoti—she knew his disappointment would be keen—but she made her letter positive; there was no appeal from its decision. However she might afterward fail, she would start free from old pride and mistakes; Diadoti and all that he stood for were out of her life for all time.

Wrapped in a warm robe, she lay on the couch by the front window, as she had so often since the tragedy, but for the first time sleep came readily and flowed on, unhaunted by dreams. Her face was serene; one slender, white hand reached out, touching the white sweater, which lay on a chair by the couch.

The first pale light of dawn came; the rays of the sun cut the dark east; one crept in at the window and fell across her face. She opened her eyes, feeling refreshed after her sleep, and looked at the clock. It marked the hour of five. A few more hours and they would be away from Seawash, away from all sights and sounds associated with him.

"The city will only make it harder," she thought, and a feeling that she couldn't leave Seawash assailed her. She must stay where she had known him, near Black Bluff, near the French road house. An uncontrollable desire to see the place again seized her—the little red-and-green house and the beds of poppies.

She slipped from the couch and went into her bedroom, moving softly so as not to awaken Mathilde, whose door stood open. Then she dressed quickly, stealthily, putting on her riding habit and boots. She would gallop through the young day for a last look at the little road house.

She came back to the front room,

closing the bedroom door behind her, and at the desk wrote a few words to Mathilde.

As she finished the note, she rose, startled, for there came up from the yard the wild, joyous barking of dogs. She stood for a moment, one hand on the chair for support, the other over her heart. The barking dogs brought back a vivid memory of him crossing the lawn in his white sweater.

While she paused, the barking of Tim grew fiercer, Blackie joined him. She stepped to the window. Pendleton was crossing the lawn, the dogs at his heels, the sun shining on his fair hair.

"It has happened," she cried, the old thought of madness returning.

At that moment he looked up and waved to her. She tried to call out, but words failed her; she turned, rushed out of the room, down the stairs, across the hall, and into the library. She flung open the French window, and he was there on the veranda.

"Pen! Pen!" she cried, as he came toward her.

"Bettina!" He took her hands.

"You came back! You came back!" She was laughing and crying at the same time.

"Yes, without a scratch," he said reassuringly.

"Tell me—"

"Now?" he pleaded.

"Yes, now. Where have you been?"

"On a freighter, bound for the west coast of Africa."

"Really?"

"Yes, really. You know the storm caught me. I might have got home, but my engine gave out. A huge wave turned me over, and I floated about until I got hold of a board. Ugh, the water was cold!"

"I know, I know," she said.

"I hung on until daylight. I'd drifted far out, and the *Helena* picked me up."

"Did they keep you prisoner?" she asked anxiously.

"No; they weren't pirates, but good fellows; they transferred me to the first boat coming this way. We never touched land, had no wireless—It was hard—the waiting. This morning early we passed the point. I spied the *Clara*, we signaled her, and Captain Baker came up and brought me home—home! How is the colonel? I've worried about him—"

"And me—didn't you think of me?" she asked.

Her hands were still in his. He held them tight and smiled at her.

"Most of the time," he said.

"Pen— Please don't make it hard for me—"

"I wouldn't, but—"

"Don't you know what I want to say?"

"Bettina?"

"Yes, that is it," between a laugh and a sob.

"Little white Bettina," he said, a few moments later, looking down into her face.

From the security of his arms she smiled at him. "You are a very nice antidote," she said.

"Did you need one?"

"Yes. Father brought you here to counteract the snobbery that had poisoned me, and because he thought that we—" Bettina paused.

"Were meant for each other, the blessed old plotter!"

"Fate never had a more adorable lieutenant." And a moment later she cried: "There's the ear! Oh, Pen, what a home-coming for him!"

F. D. burst into the room, crying at the top of his voice: "Betty, have you seen him? Baker told me—Oh, here you are! God bless you, boy!" He wrung Pen's hand, and the next moment wiped his eyes free from glad tears.

"It's good to be home, colonel—I beg your pardon—lieutenant—reduced in rank, not in efficiency," Pen said.

"What do you mean, you young rascal?" F. D. demanded.

"Bettina called you the lieutenant of fate, and it suits."

Ferdinand D. looked from Pen to his daughter and back again; a smile broke over his face. Then he threw back his head and laughed. Pendleton and Bettina joined him. Sunlight flooded the room; laughter and happiness filled it. Even Jordan, who came in to announce breakfast, smiled expansively.



STREAMS

A VALLEY sweet—a little rill
That rippled laughter through the day;
A jealous stone—a frowning hill;
Behold, the brook has changed its way!

A human heart—a love that meant
To course the fragrant fields of song;
A pebble, lo, of discontent;
Another channel, all life long!

RALPH M. THOMSON.



The Beneficent Kettle

Bonnie R. Ginger

WHEN the lung specialist told Billy to stop writing Broadway dramatic failures and go to the Rocky Mountains, Billy refused. And he would not have gone had it not been for Maggie—his sister Maggie.

Maggie had a great conviction. Billy was a genius and must be saved to the world. She was the only one to do it, for she was all he had. She solved the problem of his obstinacy by a simple expedient—she took him to the mountains herself. She gave up her position and salary to do so, but she was that sort of sister. And at that time Billy was that sort of brother.

It was true they did not know what Rocky Mountains were, but Maggie believed there was nothing like finding out.

"And you'll write a big, strong Western play, Billy. Think of that!" she said.

But he said he wouldn't think of it at all, and asked where she supposed the money was to come from. As if it wouldn't come from just where it always did, from Maggie! Not but that she was proud and glad to give it; nevertheless, a health expedition must have funds. She could finance the getting there, but afterward—that would be different. Still, there must be stenographers in the Rocky Mountains—and if not, there would be something else.

That was Maggie's attitude; she always fancied she would get along somehow and she always did. She had to.

They went first to Denver. But in Denver Maggie found from sixteen to twenty-nine stenographers to a job. Some of them, like herself, had come from the East. Then she went down to Colorado Springs—or up, rather. Colorado Springs was higher than Denver, and therefore better for Billy, said the Denver doctor. But it was not better for Maggie. Here the supply of stenographers so exceeded the demand that even Maggie was baffled. Also, the salaries were low, and she was used to a very good salary and more than ever she needed it now.

But she liked the place. She was carried right off her feet. She and Billy roomed at a private house where there was a great back lawn, with cottonwoods and box elders, through which Pikes Peak showed up like a framed portrait. Billy spent most of his time on this lawn with his back turned to the peak and his thoughts on Manhattan. He was out of tune with the Infinite, as it manifested itself hereabouts, and he resented the bigness of the country. All those long days of the journey it had forced its endless miles upon him, as if to say: "Now where's your little Manhattan?"

He had grown less pale, perhaps, but he was pouting. He kept his hands in

his pockets and lounged in a way that caused his empty shirt bosom to bulge; and all day he whistled under his breath from one corner of his mouth, dolefully and resentfully. But every one could see he was a genius.

Every day Maggie liked the place more. Every day she went over to Manitou and brought back the two bottles of iron water for Billy, which he never drank. And each time she would say:

"Billy, it's glorious! Glorious!"

And she longed to go up into those big mountains, instead of staying at the base of them. She felt longings to climb and climb and climb up and up and up—as if there were some great miracle to be found once she reached their summits; as there is, indeed, for those who know miracles when they see them: But although people asked her to go with them, she wouldn't leave Billy alone, and she dared not spend the money, either. It is appalling how expensive a little thing like health can be.

One day she had returned from Manitou with the iron water, and as usual Billy had refused to drink it. They were sitting on the back lawn, and he was regaling her with the last scene of his latest comedy, which promised to be by all odds his most brilliant failure yet. And just then a man came around the path and knocked at the back door. He had a kettle in his hand, a large, shiny, impressive kettle. No one came to the door, and Maggie half rose from her seat and asked him if she could help him. That was like Maggie; she was always ready to help. The stranger approached them under the cottonwood trees.

He was extremely tall and he seemed to bend down toward them as if he were being lowered. Attached to his long face was a mustache that looked as if it had been pasted there, and he wore a fly-back collar with ends that

seemed to throw themselves out like arms, and a necktie of a hue calculated to give shooting pains to the eye of the beholder. His physiognomy was dominated by—they were not so much eyes as places from which shot forth glances of a sort of bursting eagerness and yearning enthusiasm.

"I have here," he said, in a tone which suggested that the greatest moment of their life was upon them, "a patent aluminum cooking kettle."

He produced the shining utensil as ministers of state produce the little boy king to show the populace. One felt like removing one's hat and kneeling. Maggie was particularly impressed, because she had a strong domestic strain latent in her. But she had the presence of mind to explain that she was not the lady of the house and would only be taking up his time uselessly. At this, the stranger lowered the kettle, and his manner changed from exposition to a sort of apologetic sociability.

"You're strangers in these parts, maybe?" he queried.

Billy, who hated this particular topic, hitched his chair away and began to whistle. But Maggie was not like Billy. Besides, the stranger interested her. There was, for all his peculiarity of physique, a certain dignity about him and an air of reliability. Maggie went by instinct a good deal, and she was hardly ever wrong.

She entered into conversation with the seller of the aluminum kettle; that is, she asked him about the mountains, and the rest of the conversation was his reply. He entered upon the subject with as much zest as if he were selling mountains as well as kettles and with as sure a conviction that they were equally wonderful.

Billy, however, edging farther away, went to sleep—not because he was sleepy, but to show that all this Western eloquence had no effect upon him, that he was going to remain a complete

Manhattanite to the end. His self-elimination resulted in the stranger's increased sociability, as Maggie continued to listen with an increasing receptivity. And then, in that odd way of his that seemed both to apologize for the subject and yet to uphold the dignity of it, the stranger suddenly returned to the kettle, approaching it from a new angle, which rather took Maggie's breath away, so unexpected it was.

"I don't suppose," he said, "that you'd care to handle this article?" Seeing her frankly bewildered look, he defined "handle." "I mean, sell it. I have a few bright young folks who are making good money with it right along. Of course, they go at it businesslike."

"But," stammered Maggie, smiling, "I'm a stenographer. Though," she added, "there seem to be about seven million other stenographers in this same town—looking for work."

"Ah," said the stranger, brightening and yearning toward her genially, "that's it! One young lady working for me now is a stenographer—but she couldn't get a job, and her mother was an invalid. She was delicate herself—but she's gained steady since she took up this out-of-door work. She's made good money, too. And I had one young lady who averaged four dollars a day for seven months, and then she married. It was the kettle did it; it brought matrimony to her."

"Four dollars a day," mused Maggie. She glanced toward Billy, asleep in the hammock chair.

"That was the *average*, ma'am. See here, I'll show you what's in that kettle, if the right person has it." He produced a little pamphlet with a small picture on it of a small cottage among trees and flowers. "I built that out of the kettle. That's my home. That's Mrs. Nubb at the gate—my name's Nubb—Henry J. Nubb. It's refined work, too, meeting the ladies in their

own kitchens. All women are interested in a nice cooking utensil. Of course, a person need not work here; there's other towns. There's Cripple Creek—it ain't been worked for three years. *And it's a good town. It's as good a town as there is.*"

"Cripple Creek!" gasped Maggie. It was one of the places that had most fascinated her imagination since she had come here. She knew it was up "among the mountains" on the other side of the great peak—one of those tantalizing near-yet-far places with which the great horizon at the west was peopled, just behind the barrier of the range that towered here; like a magnificent horse, it was, whose flanks she could stroke with her hand, yet which she longed to mount and ride away in conquest.

"Billy could stay here," she was thinking swiftly. "The doctor said places like Cripple Creek were too high—at first. He need never know. Four dollars a day! And up in the mountains—I could even get material for his Western play."

She was determined that he should write a Western play. Not only could he do it better than any one else, but it would take his mind from Manhattan, interest him in the place that was to make him healthy, and then it would make him all the healthier. As for going from door to door with a kettle, there was but one question that, to her mind, could be asked about the intrinsic values of that—and that question was: Why not?

If anything honest meant four dollars a day—why not?

Billy awoke and gazed quizzically about him. He saw Maggie in the chair under the shade, writing in a little memorandum book.

"What's become of the Aluminum Boy of the Western World?" he asked, yawning. "Did he sell you a kettle?"

Maggie looked up, blushing slightly, and moistened the pencil.

"Now, Billy, what on earth could I do with a kettle?" she said carelessly.

"Well, you do all sorts of queer things, just to help people out," he said, again yawning. She bent her head over the memorandum book.

Morton Smee, general manager of the Executioner Mine, usually took his lunches at the Colonial Hotel. Hotels, like mines, have illogical names. The Colonial suggested nothing even remotely colonial, but it set out good meals. Morton had succeeded in getting a corner table far removed from the big table where sat the dozen or so young lady teachers who also favored this hostelry; not that he had any misogynous motive, but because the teachers were forever corralling him and making him promise to come to their parties and dances, while he had other designs for his evenings than to bridge them away at the Wedgewood—why should a card club in Cripple Creek bear the name of Wedgewood?—or to hop them away at the Cloverleaf hops.

From this corner table Morton one day perceived a young lady enter the dining room and sit opposite him by the window. There was nothing unusual in a young lady's coming to that dining room for lunch, nor in her looking about her curiously and gazing from the window upon the stream of Cripple Creek humanity—of the male persuasion—as it loitered by at noon. Morton himself was a chronic observer of the *genus homo*—including *homo-ess*. Or, rather—at least after the second time this young lady partook of Colonial fare by that window opposite him—he ceased to regard *homo* and began to concentrate on *homo-ess*.

For the young lady continued to lunch there. Three days she continued, and then Morton began to want to do something more than observe; he

wanted to be observed; he wanted to know that young lady, and he wanted her to know him. So far, she hadn't seemed to distinguish him from the general ensemble, and Morton was not used to being thrown in as just local color. He was piqued.

Then—on the fourth day, it was—he perceived that at last she perceived him. Her bright, friendly glance was singling him out unconsciously, as if surprised; and it was because she was unconscious of it that her gaze lingered upon him. Morton had the odd hallucination that the half dozen tables or so between them were suddenly eliminated, and that she was right close to him, here. And under this hallucination, he blundered. He did not bow, or smile, but he sort of *looked* a greeting, a telepathic "How do you do?"

The young lady immediately gazed in quite another direction; and in vain, for days after that, did he try to intercept that friendly, bright glance again. She did not look annoyed or embarrassed—she just did not look. Morton felt like a man swimming for life, who thinks a preserver has been thrown to him and then finds it was only a banana skin cast overboard, while the ship that might have saved him sails by.

"This simply won't do," he told himself, baffled and piqued. "Can't I manage some way to get acquainted with that girl? What's a general manager for, if he can't do a little thing like that?" And he spoke to the school-teachers about her.

But she came there only at lunch, it seemed, and that was their busy time, and she did not room where any of them roomed—and if one set out to make acquaintance with every young lady who came to Cripple Creek, one would have scant time for teaching or anything else. They were not unsociable, but what they said was true.

So next day Morton maneuvered to

leave the dining room just as she left, and he held open the inner door for her. He caught the gleam in her averted eyes. They both laughed suddenly, without knowing they were going to.

"The plain old home remedies work best, don't they?" he said.

Her eyes were all crinkled up; she was trying to stop laughing; she had blushed, too. He followed her brazenly to the pavement.

"You know," he said urgently, "we're going to know each other. Fate decrees it. Why do you make it hard?"

She shook her head, the laugh sobering down, though she was not at all offended. He became argumentative.

"I didn't think you were conventional. Cripple Creek is, of course—but not you, surely. If you are, won't you talk to some of those school-teachers, so they can introduce us? I know them all. They'll recommend me."

She laughed again, but started up the very steep sidewalk that led up the very extremely steep side street. After a few steps she had to stop. He was beside her.

"That's our altitude, you know. You must respect it. If you try to walk away from fate up here, you'll burst a vessel."

"Please," she said, turning, with a smile that was the last of the fast-vanishing laugh, "I'm not conventional, but there isn't any fate around here." And she hazarded a Cripple Creek colloquialism: "It's nonbearing rock."

He saw that under her smile she was really pleading. He bowed.

"Go back, Fido—eh? Very well, I'll go. But we're going to meet. What I'm telling you is true."

She laughed, showing that she was not offended, and went on up the steep hillside, while Morton, sighing, descended and made his way toward the Executioner, perched far above on the hill opposite.

"We *must* meet," he thought. "I never felt anything so imperatively necessary to my well-being in all my life before. We must meet—we shall meet!"

And at the same time a little voice inside kept saying: "Oh, yes, all very well, that. But *how* are you going to meet?"

"Well, then," he answered this voice, "why am I a general manager? What was the office created for if a fellow can't manage?"

As one to whom altitude is not a peril, he climbed the great hill, a lithe, tall figure, khaki clad, agile, and determined. His sombrero tilted back, displaying frankly a forehead from which the hair had prematurely receded somewhat. Once or twice he stopped, visualizing the strange *homo*-ess who was imperatively necessary to his well-being, and he said, "The devil!" and sighed. He had smiling, thoughtful, nile-green eyes.

One morning Maggie achieved an anniversary. She had been selling kettles just two weeks and had cleared seventy dollars—if the order book didn't fib. To-day Mr. Nubb was coming up from Colorado Springs to deliver the kettles—a job for a man, he had written her. So she would not have to stop work, not for a single minute. Never had she dreamed work could be so fascinating. She traded kettles for her room and even her meals—except lunches at the Colonial. And for two weeks she had been standing on the hearthstones of Cripple Creek, talking intimately to the housewife portion of the most interesting population in the world. Sometimes the housewife was a man, and then it was more interesting still. But always it was interesting. Now, stenography isn't as reliable as that.

Hills! The hills of Cripple Creek! So she said over and over. And so

she said again, as this morning she rounded an outlying dump, close upon noon. Sublime hills, ridiculously adorned with holes! Peppered, as if with the tiny, bored holes of some infinitesimal insect, though the holes were oftentimes great mines, and with a glass you could see the insects at work, boring. It was sublimity overrun with insectivorous busynesses and noisinesses and heavings and carryings and scurryings; and all the time the chug of hoist engines and the clang of ore chutes and the scream and bellow of whistles came down into the valley with astounding distinctness. And the ugly trolleys gashed and shoved and crept and climbed, till they lost themselves behind the hills on their way to the twin camp somewhere up yonder behind the ridge.

But most of all, the dump's fascinated her. They came right down the hills and spilled and sprawled into the valley, clustered around schools and stores, encroached on private yards and churches, choked by-streets, and even turned aside main streets. They were the real population, the citizens for whom banks and hotels stepped aside. Some were rusty and old, some brightly blue-gray with the newly dumped ore.

And from the valley floor rose Bull Hill and his huge neighbors. And all the west flashed with the far, cold flash of the Snowy Range, all down the sky line, a hundred miles away.

Up above Maggie, on one of the biggest dumps, she could read the letters on the white-painted shaft house of a mine. She was interested in that mine rather indirectly. It was the mine for which, picking at random, she had told Billy she was doing stenography. She thought that when one told a fib, one should tell a good one.

The name on the shaft house was "Executioner."

There were some unpainted shacks in the gully, unpromising enough for

a four-dollar kettle, or a four-dollar anything, one would have thought. But Maggie had discovered that in Cripple Creek you never can tell. She always tried all.

She took no order from the long-nosed clairvoyant with the shrunken sweater and the cold, who dwelt in the first shack. Nor from the woman doing washing in the next. Yet Maggie found it always wonderful each time she knocked at a door. Who would open that door? What new specimen of humanity, with what ideas—not only of kettles, but of other things? For Maggie did not always confine herself to the kettle, and some of the housewives liked to talk. And it always meant, on Maggie's part, new tactics, new approaches, and always impromptu. It was a game of wits, woman meeting woman—and it was not a stupid game.

In the next shack, a slipshod, despondent woman was frying beefsteak on a rusty stove on which brewed some mountain sage, watched over by a very old man who was chewing tobacco with terrifying rapidity. This woman not only ordered the kettle, but paid for it in advance. Such were the surprises of kettling.

One shack was left, removed from these up the slope of a hill. Maggie was tired and also hungry, but she would not return to the Colonial, so far yonder over the dumps, until she had knocked at the last door. She reached the shack and knocked. And, standing there, she glanced up and saw, over the shaggy top of a great hill, the startling nearness and whiteness of Pikes Peak. And it seemed to draw her right up there to itself, until she stood, unburdened by vessels of the culinary art, beside this great elemental force. Somehow it made her feel *big*, too. It seemed to include her on purpose.

The door of the shack was already open. On the threshold stood—the nile-

eyed young man in khaki—Morton Smeee. He was beaming like a reception committee. Maggie stood on the little wooden step, unable to move, and quite without power to speak.

"I told you," he said, "it was decreed. And you've come right up to eat out of my hand!"

Maggie found her tongue. "I'm selling a kettle," she said succinctly. "Is the lady of the house in?"

"Yes, I'm it," said Morton. "And I'm so glad you have a kettle—I just burned a hole in mine. I'll buy it—if it isn't too expensive, you understand. Of course, there are the five-and-ten-cent stores. Do step right in and let me see it."

Maggie inhaled deeply of the ozone. She was determined not to laugh, but the nile-green eyes made it very hard.

"Who does live here?" she tried to ask with dignity.

"I live here," he said, "though you don't seem to believe me. And don't you think I don't know a good kettle when I see one. Is that pan of yours any good?"

"It is," she replied, rather faintly.

"But how good?" he demanded. "Have you ever cooked on it?"

"No," she said, and at last she was laughing, though still she struggled for her dignity. "I'm on business," she said sternly.

Morton shouted.

"What?" He took out his watch. "Twelve-twenty this minute! Do you mean you don't belong to the Kettle Sellers' Union? Are you a scab-ette? Oh, see here!" he exclaimed suddenly, in alarm, for she was turning to go. "Don't go! You don't need to, honest. I'm harmless—and I do want that kettle. Tell me how it works—come in and show me." And, fixing her with the wonderful persuasiveness of his green eyes, he said: "Let's cook dinner on it! *Unless you're afraid!*"

Maggie never was afraid. And those

green eyes had been tempting her for two whole weeks. She went in.

Some hours previously—in fact, very early that morning—Billy, the playwright, had taken train from Colorado Springs to Cripple Creek.

Just what the impulse was he hardly knew. It indicated his improvement in health, however, that he could have an impulse and act on it. He missed Maggie. The comedy had staled on his hands. Getting her wonderful letters—every day they came—filled with breathless, wonderful accounts and descriptions and anecdotes, his imagination had stirred upon a topic foreign to Manhattan. He began to turn the hammock chair toward Pikes Peak instead of away from it; he began to listen to other people's conversation about the mountains; something in him began to stir, and it was interest.

Billy did not know it, but that was a great moment for his genius; it had been growing in a pot, but now it was going to be planted in open earth, and the roots were wriggling their toes and stretching. Maybe it had come over that imprisoned plant that it was going to bear something besides failures, after all.

And impulsively Billy decided to go up to Cripple Creek. No matter if it was higher, he'd go up there and see the wonderful place. Besides, he was wondering how on earth Maggie gathered up so much to tell him, if her office hours were hours at all. Still, she was a remarkable girl. It had been coming over him just lately how really wonderful she was. He had been thinking that since she left him there in the hammock chair, while she foraged for funds. In other words, Billy was spoiled rather than wicked, and it was Maggie who had spoiled him. Perhaps he was seeing that.

As the train wound up and up over the Front Range, the passengers made

the usual scramble to find the "seeing side" of the coach, so that they might look down upon the chasms and tangled loops beneath and say, in awed wonder, "We were in that place a few moments ago!"

Billy, so straining to see past a very fat woman who shared the seat with him, felt himself touched on the shoulder. He turned about, to confront in the seat behind him—the Aluminum Boy of the Western World, Henry J. Nubb.

"I'd be glad for you to take my place," Mr. Nubb urged apologetically and sociably, and he insisted on changing. "I make this trip often, and it's your first," he explained.

Billy took the seat gratefully, with expanding notion of the kindness of Nubb. The kettle seemed to be absent, but the Nubb geniality and enthusiasm were there—and when, at St. Peter's Dome, the man next Billy got out, Mr. Nubb took the place, and from then on talked uninterruptedly to the dramatic failurist, who this time listened.

Yes, and listened even when, as was inevitable, Nubb did introduce the kettle into the conversation. It was most amazing how in his hands that kettle became a thing of universal beneficence, a gift of the gods to mortal men—at four dollars a gift, of course—a work of art, a triumph of science, an aluminum blessing to the world. Nubb loved that kettle the same way that Billy loved his plays. And he had the same faith in it. And Billy suddenly understood this, and he grew, dramatically, about four inches. Every time we understand, we sympathize; every time we sympathize, we grow.

"To think," cried Maggie, "it was what I had been saying it was, and I hadn't lied! It is a marvelous 'uten-shul'!"

"It's the aluminum hope of America," said Morton gravely. "Here's to

it!" And he raised aloft his fourth cup of coffee, tempered with condensed cream. Between them lay the remnants of a feast made entirely in the sample kettle on Morton's little camp stove, where it now reposed, shiny and impressive, dominating the shack.

"I suppose," said Maggie, "I've shocked Cripple Creek terribly."

"If it ever finds out—you have," he said. "But no place on earth is so easily shocked; only the prigs escape. But, you see, I knew you weren't a prig, so I laid the plot."

"The plot?" she exclaimed.

"Certainly. Why, I found out what you did, just as I told you I should, that day you wouldn't let me talk to you. And I watched your routes—and I calculated when you'd reach my shack. The only trouble was, I feared you wouldn't think it worth while to come down into this little gully—it looks so poverty-struck, like. Everything hung on that. But you did come, didn't you?" he said, bending on her the gaze that always bewildered, and yet, as it were, affiliated her. And, as always, she could not be angry, and, therefore, and in spite of herself, she laughed. "You see, I told you it was fate," he said. "And you can't run away from fate—in this altitude."

"You seem to have tried to push fate along," she said, wondering if she ought to feel guilty because she had shocked Cripple Creek, "if it ever found out."

"Well, I asked myself what a general manager was for," he said. "He ought to be for managing, oughtn't he?"

Maggie looked at the little cabinet in the corner, where his collection of ores stood. He had been explaining them to her and telling her about minerals and metals and mines and mining—and she was fairly bursting with all the new and even more wonderful things she would have now to write Billy about.

"Tell me," she said, looking at him,

"what mine you manage—if I may ask."

"Well, I'm not ashamed of it. It's a rather good mine. It's the Executioner," he said.

Maggie set down her cup and felt the red flare going all over her face. "The Executioner!" she stammered. She could find no words; she just turned redder and redder.

"You didn't think I managed a prospect, did you?" he asked. "Just because I live in a shack? I like the shack. I can study here—and be alone. I experiment a bit——"

"As to-day, for instance," murmured Maggie, twisting the tablecloth.

But the green eyes were upon her. "Not to-day. Nor any day—about you. I counted on you being solid gold from the first time I saw you in the Colonial——"

He broke off suddenly, listening, and Maggie, raising her head, listened, too. Some one was coming toward the shack. Some one reached the shack and knocked at the open door.

"Pardon me," said some one's voice, "but does Mr. Morton Smeel live here?"

At the sound of that voice, Maggie leaped to her feet. The voice belonged to Billy, her brother.

Morton, in the doorway, acknowledged his identity. And then came Billy's next words:

"Isn't my sister a stenographer at your mine?"

"But—what is your sister's name?" asked Morton.

At that moment a strange, strangled sound came from the table behind him. He turned. Maggie had risen, redder than a sunset, and was signaling him wildly. He paused, bewildered, and, of course, Billy shoved nearer the doorway and peered in. And he saw Maggie.

"Why, Mag—for the Lord's sake!" he ejaculated, excusably astonished. But he would not have been so aston-

ished at seeing her there—he was used to her unconventionalities—it was her confusion that perplexed him. He came into the shack, staring in an odd, questioning way that seemed to be asking if he ought to be disapproving.

And then suddenly Morton understood—and it was not difficult, for he had known all the time that Maggie was not a professional kettle seller.

"Yes, your sister is employed by the Executioner," he said genially. "Of course she is. We—we were doing a bit of extra work down here. Won't you sit down? You must be tired from the walk."

He pushed forward a chair and saw Maggie's eyes upon him, shamed and beseeching. He signaled to her, "Trust me," and entered assiduously upon the rôle of host to the queer little thin chap, of whom his entire knowledge was that he was her brother. And he began to understand why she had been selling the kettle, because that is the sort of thing one sees so often out in that country—the strong taking their weak ones there and doing anything God is kind enough to send them to do, so that the weak may be made strong thereby.

But in his heart he was calling Billy a miserable little runt to let her do it. But he wronged Billy somewhat.

"Well, Mag, you look great!" Billy said, gazing at her.

For the first time, Maggie found her speech: "Why did you come here, Billy? The doctor told you it was too high."

"Well, another one told me it wasn't. And the local color—Maggie, I believe you're right—there's a play up here." He turned to Morton confidentially. "A big, throbbing play, you know. Not cheap melodrama. I'd like to come up here and write it—in just such a little cabin as this—shack, you call 'em, don't you? It would be great!"

"I'm flattered you like my shack,"

said Morton. "Have you noticed the deckle-edge rafters? Oregon pine, hand torn. And the Louis Cans scheme—all kinds of cans—tomato, sardine, beans, corn—"

He stopped short. In directing Billy's willing gaze about the room, he had brought the aluminum kettle into notice. From its place on the stove it seemed to shine with increasing impressiveness. And, seeing it, Billy started and began to gaze at it fixedly. Morton tried to divert him, but he got up and went to it and took it in his hands. He then turned upon Maggie a gaze of such scrutiny that she jumped up from the chair suddenly, covering her flaming face with her hands.

"Maggie," said Billy, in the calm voice in which his heroes always spoke in their tense, dramatic moments, "you fibbed! You don't work at the Executioner Mine, or any other mine. You sell Nubb's kettle. That's where your descriptions came from—and your anecdotes and your local color. You've been selling this thing, and you didn't tell me! You fibbed!"

"It's a wonderful kettle, and it's wonderful work," said Maggie hysterically. "Don't you be a snob, Billy. Don't you belittle that kettle. Don't you insult me. You go back to Colorado Springs, where it isn't too high. Playwriting is your business, not interfering with me!"

Instead of being angry, Billy grinned. He was an attractive, little, queer chap when he grinned. And, taking the kettle from the stove, he held it toward them, striking an attitude.

"I have here, ma'am," he said ingratiatingly, and yet with immense convincingness, "a patent aluminum cooking kettle. It is the peerless wonder of a scientific age."

And, without pause, he glibly, and with inimitable effect, rattled off the little harangue that Mr. Nubb gave in printed form to his agents when they

first took up the kettleting vocation; the same harangue Maggie had been giving on the doorsteps and hearths of Cripple Creek those last two weeks.

Breathless, bewildered, she came toward him.

"I see you recognize the unusual merits of this article, ma'am," said Billy, gleaming at her. "We have three sizes, this being the medium; also, the medium price—four dollars, payable on delivery, if preferred. Money down accepted."

"Billy!" gasped Maggie. "What does this mean?"

Billy set down the kettle. "Why—it means that your precious Nubb was on the train when I came up this morning, and he talked kettle till I began to feel kettle—and he gave me a sample at the station, and I sold it on the way up here. Money in advance." He laid four silver dollars on the table. "I'm going to sell kettles in Cripple Creek and write a big, strong Western play. And," he added, "don't you get into the habit of telling fibs. It's not like you, and I don't approve. It will keep me outdoors," he added illogically, "and I'm no invalid, anyway. I never felt better in my life."

Morton came forward and seized Billy by the hand.

"Sir," he said, "if you mean that about writing a play by first getting to know the place—shake! Most people write Western plays by first eliminating the West. I thank you. And your sister did not fib—she is employed by the Executioner Mine from this day forth, if she will accept the position. It is absolutely true," he said to Maggie, who was trying to believe him, "that we need another assistant secretary. And," he added, "the Executioner pays a real salary. Any good mine does."

"I told you," he said to her, as they went all together townward a little later, Billy to meet Mr. Nubb and get an-

other kettle, Maggie to go to the Executioner with Morton, "it was fate. I hope after this you'll be more respectful of 'fate. Because—it isn't all through yet—there's more coming."

It came. That very year they were married. That very year Billy's West-

ern play succeeded on Broadway. And Billy remained in the West to write another.

"Well," said Mr. Nubb, "I wouldn't handle the kettle if I didn't know what an elegant utensil it is. But I know, and when you got faith in a thing, people feel it. And that makes it go."



LOVE'S JUNE

I SEE the flash of a crimson wing
 Against a pearl-flecked, turquoise sky.
 From the golden throat of some feathered thing
 A clear, gay song drifts sweetly by.
 Each tall tree nods an emerald head;
 The liquid sunshine falls like rain;
 The garden's heart is a perfumed red;
 And I know that it must be June again.

Yet my mind turns back to a winter night,
 A still, small room, and the fire's glow
 Weaving fantastic webs of light;
 While, at the pane, the storm-tossed snow
 Circled and whirled in the bitter wind
 That shrilled defiance to sullen skies.
 But, to us, at the fire, the Fates were kind,
 As we kissed and smiled in each other's eyes!

L'Envoi.

June! You are less than June to me.
 Flaunt your bright flag—I will not know.
 I am deaf to the call of woodland and sea,
My summertime came with the snow!

— FAITH BALDWIN.



John Tremaire

BY

MARIE VAN VORST

When scarcely more than a boy, John Tremaire runs away from home after the theft of ten thousand dollars from the bank in which he is employed. His elder brother, David, makes good the loss and the matter is hushed up, so that only four people know of it—David, his mother, Leavitt, the family lawyer, and Malvern, the president of the bank. Fifteen years later, John returns, rich and successful, to find the homestead about to be sold for debt and his mother on the point of going North to live with David's widow—the woman to whom John was once engaged—and two sons. John sets to work to redeem and develop the property and to win his mother's confidence and love. On several occasions, as he is working in the fields in laborer's clothes, he meets Malvern's daughter, Isobel, who falls in love with him even before she knows who he is. Although he returns her love, he treats her coldly and rudely, feeling that marriage is impossible for him because of the stain on his name. For the same reason he refuses a congressional nomination. Coal and iron are discovered on John's property and he offers Malvern the presidency of the company formed to mine them. Malvern, who dislikes and distrusts John, refuses, although on the verge of ruin. For Isobel's sake John then plans to have coal "discovered" on a worthless piece of Malvern's land.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE house that Leavitt occupied had had an importance in Revolutionary days, when one of Washington's generals had owned it. Where the present master now sat musing of John Tremaire and his spiritual battles, other campaigns had been planned by Washington and his officers, and the old room still retained some of its eighteenth-century characteristics. The colonial table was kept polished like a mirror by Pompey, who had been a body servant in the War of the Rebellion and was distinguished among his race as being a "pow'ful clean niggah." On the polished floor were a few worn old rag-carpet rugs, made by Leavitt's mother herself. The entire walls were paneled, and the smoke of innumerable fires had darkened them—the old ceiling, as well.

Leavitt had made no modern innovations in his house, for the very good reason that he could not have paid the bills. With the utmost economy, by wearing the shabbiest of clothes and the most old-time articles of dress, by denying himself every pleasure, he just managed to live, and Pompey looked after him like a mother.

He passed months of his existence in this old room, the one completely furnished apartment in the rather dilapidated, rambling house. On the chimney stood a pair of superb candlesticks, in which Pompey now lighted, one by one, the twinkling lights. Behind them their reflections shone out from the mirror, and the rosy glow of the fire crept up along its colonial frame.

The early December twilight gathered without, and the negro drew in the faded red curtains.

"Gwine to gib yo' pow'ful great dinah to-night, Marse Sam."

This announcement was vaguely heard by his master. There was nothing new in it. Pompey regularly tickled his master's appetite with the same words every night.

"Li'l' bit o' ham 'n' aigs, cohn braid, 'n' a shakin' custard, suh."

"Very good, Pompey." Leavitt did not remark that the menu had been unvaried for the past week.

When Pompey slipped out, closing the white door behind the red curtains, he left his master alone in the agreeable room, in the fire and candlelight. Leavitt's musings were not very happy ones. To begin with, he felt himself cheated out of an hour of Mrs. Tremaine's society, and he always considered that those hours could never be made up. He sighed, and thought of John, of the extreme generosity of his nature combined with a certain moral weakness. He wondered if he would have approved of John's suggestion if it had come from a man whose record had been different, and he also wondered why he had not more emphatically challenged John's point of view.

"It is curious," he said to himself, "the effect the boy has upon me." He called him "boy," seeing him in that moment as he remembered him years before. "He calls forth a certain respect and admiration. The truth of the matter is that he blinds me by his charm. I am a weak old man. I should have pulled him up severely."

Some one had come in downstairs. Leavitt heard the bell ring and the front door shut, and in a few moments Pompey's step could be heard coming up the bare stairs and his cheerful conversation with a new visitor. He threw open the door of the library with much gesture, bowing his gray head low.

"Miss Isobel, Mistah Lebbitt. Said she could walk right in, suh." And Pompey shut the door behind Isobel Malvern.

"My dear child!" said the lawyer,

enormously surprised at her appearance. "This is an honor, a great honor! Let me take your muff andippet, and sit here by the fire."

He touched the chair that John Tremaine had just left. Leavitt had often dreamed of the door behind the red rep curtain opening and Mrs. Tremaine coming in. He had never expected so young a visitor. Isobel did not take the chair he offered, but stood behind it, leaning with her muff upon the back.

"You're surprised, aren't you?" she said. "Father has been calling on dearest, and I took this chance of coming to see you."

Leavitt, in whose mind the face of one woman displaced all others, could not but give Isobel credit for the beauty she possessed. Her walk through the December cold had made her cheeks red as roses. She wore a little fur hat with a bit of mistletoe on it, its clear, crystal globes white against the green leaves. She loosened her furs a little in the warmth of the room, and as she stood behind the chair in which John Tremaine had sat, Leavitt could see him still sitting there, the figure of this lovely woman behind him.

"I am delighted to see you," he said. "I was sorry that I did not see you the other day at my office. What is wrong?"

Isobel smiled.

"Does it have to be wrong," she asked, "because I come to see you?"

"When ladies go to their lawyer's there is usually something amiss."

"Life's amiss a little bit; don't you think it is, Mr. Leavitt?"

"Come, come! You should not think so, at twenty-two."

"You will never think so," she said calmly. "You are one of those people in whom everything turns to sunlight."

"Thank you, my dear," said the lawyer. "That is very graceful and pretty; and if you will let me return the com-

pliment; I am sure you bring it wherever you go."

The girl nodded her head. There was a grave expression on her usually animated face.

"Sunlight is all very well," she said, "but I am beginning to find out that it does not pay bills or run a household; and, Mr. Leavitt, I have come to see you because something's got to be done."

She used, in this instance, the same words that John Tremaine had used, but her solution was not likely to be the same as his.

"Father," said the girl, as if she were the older of the two, "is utterly unpractical, and it puts him in such a state of excitement when I speak of money that I don't dare to broach the subject to him. So I have come to a decision, Mr. Leavitt, and I want you to help me."

Leavitt went over, took her hand, drew her round to the big chair, and made her sit there.

"I am going to work for my living, and I want you to get me a position."

"My dear child!" said the lawyer, who had been unable to work for his living because no one wanted his services. "My dear child! What can you do?"

"I can keep house fairly well."

She was so lovely as she sat there, her hands clasped on her muff, her young face lifted, that Leavitt's thoughts wandered entirely from the practical question, and he thought of her only as the perfect woman, the mate most decidedly created for such a man as John Tremaine. It also occurred to him immediately that if John carried out his scheme, Isobel's working for her living would be out of the question.

"I thought I might be a companion for some old lady," said Isobel, "or teach children."

"Certainly, certainly," said Leavitt absent-mindedly.

"Aren't you interested?" she asked, with a sharp little note of disappointment in her voice. "You see, you are the only person in the world I can ask."

"What would your father do without you?" asked Leavitt.

"What will he do *with* me if I stay?"

"Things are so serious as that, eh?" asked the lawyer, and he thought, as he spoke, that perhaps the better thing would be to help her in her intention and ignore the fact—as indeed he was pledged to do—of any other solution of the problem.

"I do not believe there are one hundred dollars in the bank," said the girl. "We owe bills everywhere, and as far as the property is concerned, it is just as Riverside was—mortgaged up to the limit and the interest overdue."

Leavitt sighed.

"I have lots of rich friends," said the girl, "but you know that I would rather die than ask their help. I would not even go to any of them as a companion. I want to go to a perfect stranger."

"You are quite right," said Leavitt.

They remained for a few moments in silence, and Leavitt watched her in the light of the fire and the candles.

"I do not know, my dear, whether you were informed of it or not, but when the Blythe Iron Company was formed, John Tremaine offered your father the position of president and the option of a great deal of stock."

She looked up, surprised. At the mention of John's name she had flushed.

"Oh! Of course I did not know it! Why did he refuse?"

Leavitt immediately regretted his information.

"You need not tell me," she exclaimed. "He hates Mr. Tremaine. He loses no opportunity to show me so.

Ever since my accident, he has tacitly forbidden him the house."

Leavitt watched the fire.

"Dreadful, I think, to show such enmity. It's a sort of jealousy, too," she continued fearlessly. "It's a cloud between my father and me." She turned his information over in her mind and continued: "You don't mean to tell me that for some personal prejudice my father refused a position and a fortune?"

Leavitt made no response, and she went on:

"Why, it's the most incredible prejudice I ever heard of!"

"Don't speak of it to him, Isobel."

"Oh, no," she said bitterly. "I never go near the subject of John Tremaine with daddy." She rose, with her last words. "It's late," she said. "Father is to meet me at the hotel. He thinks I have gone to see a friend while he makes his visit to Mrs. Tremaine. Now, will you try to help me, Mr. Leavitt?" She put her hand out to him frankly. "I must look in the papers, I suppose, and answer advertisements; or perhaps put an advertisement in the paper. What do you think?"

She wrinkled her fair brows. Leavitt took her hand between both of his.

"I'll think it over to-night, my dear," he said, "and I'll come over to Malvern some time to-morrow and talk it out with you."

"Please," she urged, "don't lose any time, will you?"

And Leavitt reflected what a frail straw against the wind of debts and mortgage interest Isobel's effort would be. He took her downstairs himself and stood on the gallery while she walked quickly down toward the little hotel not more than two hundred feet away. Her slim, charming figure, her little fur hat, with its mistletoe, blended in the soft darkness of the winter evening, and he saw her vaguely until she was lost in the completer shadow.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

John had been shooting at some distance from Riverside, and was walking home slowly toward the end of the day, taking the path along the back pasture. The two rabbits he had shot flung over his back, his gun on his shoulder, he stood at the bars of the old fence, waiting a few moments before going up to the house. It was now eighteen months since he had reluctantly taken down these bars in order that Isobel's mare might pass through. With the same reluctance he had let her enter his life. Lately he had scarcely spoken to the girl. What an unconscionable boor she must have thought him! What a crooked-natured brute! Once or twice it had been on the tip of his tongue to say:

"I know you love me. I love you. Will you marry a thief? You see what they think of me here in Virginia; you see what I am to-day. You boasted yourself that you knew me under my disguise. Don't you think I have made up for that past? You say they call me 'the big Tremaine.' Are you big enough to marry a man with a stain on his name? Now you know why I don't run for Congress."

He had been tempted to say this to her. What would she have answered? He thought he knew the metal she was made of, the pride of race she represented. She was as proud as his mother. Malvern would tell his daughter some day; John did not doubt it.

As if she had come now in answer to his thoughts of her, and would herself respond to his questions, he saw Isobel coming toward him across the fields. She seemed to express the spirit of the land, of Virginia. She was in nut brown, the color of the rimey earth. It was a three-mile walk from her door to the back pasture, and the exercise had given her a clear, red color like the stain of berries under snow.

She was full of the charm of health and youth. There was vigor as well as grace in the swing of her walk. She seemed, as she approached him, to sparkle; she was brightness and charm itself, and did not in the least suggest an unhappy love.

"She does not care for me," he thought; "certainly not deeply." And he could not have honestly answered then that he was glad to think this. Did he want to break her heart? Was he sincere in his process of disillusioning her? Had he positively succeeded in making up his mind to give her up?

Isobel swung a hemlock stick. Her short skirt was high above her russet boots. Her coat was open, and her white shirt gleamed like a dove's breast. Her face, swept by the air and bright with exercise, seemed like a flower lifted to the day. She came up to him frankly, holding out her hand, blushing gloriously; and John, apparently ignoring that frank, pretty hand, leaned his gun against the bars and thrust his hands into the pockets of his shooting coat.

"Aren't you going to shake hands with me?"

"I've been killing things; my hands aren't clean."

"Nonsense! Hunters were made before prejudices."

"I could not touch anything so immaculate as your glove."

Isobel drew her glove off, laughing. Her bare hand shone white as she held it out again. It said to him: "Take me." She wooed him. He fixed his eyes upon her so intently that she looked away and, coming up to the bars, touched them absently.

"When I came here first, you did not want me to ride over your fresh-plowed field."

"No."

"Nor did you the second time, either."

"No."

Isobel pulled off a splinter from the silvery old bars, which had been whitened by the rains of a century.

John said roughly: "Don't destroy my property! You're a vandal!"

Isobel pulled at a splinter on the ter with something of a savage little gesture.

"You are more human to the wood," she said, "than you are to human beings." And she started to tear away another bit.

John all of a sudden put his hand down over hers. His pulses raced, and in his clasp of her hand he spoke as plainly as if he had said the words that pounded in his breast. He lifted Isobel's hand, held it a moment in both his, then flung it from him, turned, and strode away across the field.

Leaning for support against the bars, tremendously stirred, happy beyond words, her hand, still alive from his touch, resting on the fresh gash in the wood, she called after him:

"John Tremaine! John Tremaine!"

Tremaine walked a few steps, then turned and came back to her. As soon as she saw the expression on his face, she regretted that she had called him. The warfare with himself in those few seconds had been hard; his expression was cynical, and the poor girl saw nothing of the feelings she wished to see. It was the face of a man who does not hesitate to play with a woman. The fact that he blamed himself for his weakness did not make what he set himself to do any the easier.

"Well," he said, "you called me back. I think there is nothing that we can say."

He admired her as she stood there quietly, gaining her self-control. Such a brave young creature! The qualities he liked the best she possessed—straightforwardness, ardor. He believed that, as she had not hesitated to take the fence at no matter what risk, so she would not hesitate to overcome

fearlessly any obstacle in her way. It was a bitter moment to him that he was in honor bound to make himself out to her a brute and that he might not let her see his profound, sincere feelings. But now he was determined to cut their relationship short, no matter what it cost him. During the past day or two, he had been on the point of throwing up all his interests and returning to South Africa.

"Why should we be enemies?" he heard her say; and he answered harshly:

"Men and women are more often enemies than people think. Unless they are in love with each other, they are indifferent; and very often when they are in love with each other——"

She interrupted him: "We draw our conclusions, Mr. Tremaine, only from the experiences we have known. Don't you think so? Yours must have been very hard."

He set his mind against the fact of her interest in whatever his experiences had been. It was just this gentle interest in his life that he had always looked for. Now it had come, and it could not be anything to him.

"My experiences have been those of most men who have knocked about the world," he said indifferently; "neither better nor worse. I left home expecting little." He laughed. "I must say, taking it altogether, things turned out rather better than I thought they would."

He knew that it was on her lips to ask him why he acted toward her as he did and that she could not put him such a question. He succeeded so thoroughly in his assumption of rude indifference that he chilled her; and then he did the cruellest thing a man can do—treated the situation lightly, as if he were taking advantage of the difference in their years, as if she were to him nothing but a little girl.

"You mustn't take people and things

too seriously, Miss Malvern," he said evenly. "There is less romance in people's lives than they suggest. By the way, Leavitt tells me that you are going North to work for your living. Were you romancing? I fancy you were."

He smiled at her as if she were the most casual acquaintance, and he saw how his cruelty told. She stiffened, she grew pale, she half bit her under lip, and he fancied that she was keeping back the tears.

"I was going to see Mrs. Tremaine," she said, "to tell her that I have found something to do, and to say good-by."

John drew a breath that was not all relief. If she were going away, it would solve much of the problem.

"My mother is at home," he said, "and will be delighted to see you."

Isobel shook her head. She wanted to be alone with her emotion, which in a few moments would be difficult to control. She could not have gone to Riverside.

"Take her my message, will you?"

"With pleasure," he said, less ungraciously. "What message?"

"That I am going North to-morrow, and that I send her"—she hesitated; the word had never passed between them—"my love."

The light of the winter sunset, red as blood, fell over the rimy ground at their sides, touching the cold, silver fence to coral, flashing bright along the river, and holding both John and Isobel in its glory as they stood there, the fence between them.

"Then you will not see the Tremaines," he said, "if you are going North to-morrow? They are coming for the Christmas holidays."

"No," she said, "I shall not see them." And she thought of Julia Tremaine with a sudden dreadful ache at her heart.

John did not then connect the two remotely in his mind or realize that Julia's return to Riverside would

awaken Isobel's jealousy. The fact that she was going away the following day and that he would probably not see her again began to possess its full significance. He would be in South Africa when she returned from her little journey into the working world to find that she was an heiress. He would be gone.

In a second, the dreariness of his future without her and the new sentimental suffering he was about to embark upon struck him with all their force. This was the one woman he wanted for his wife. He would have been glad to have picked her up there, at the pasture bars, to have carried her off out of Virginia, out of his past, into a new life. Instead of that, if he had the courage to carry out his plans, he would never see her again. It was the only way out of the maze.

"Good-by!" he heard her say.

This time she did not extend her hand, but she stood, without making any effort to go.

There was that in him—strongly masculine though he was, brutal though he could be—which in every instance of his life led him toward the consideration of others' happiness. He knew so well how to suffer that he could not bear to tolerate it for others. The fact that he was likely now to leave an ache in the heart of this woman was intolerable to him. If there was to be any suffering, he wanted to bear it alone. He believed the kindest thing to do was to break the spell now.

"It is really good-by," he said practically, "because I am going back to South Africa in a short time."

He saw her start, her eyes widen, and her lips part.

"Going back to South Africa!" he heard her murmur; and he said hurriedly:

"Yes, yes! I have had enough of Virginia. I am a born wanderer. I am restless now for the free-and-easy life

I have led for years. You can understand that," he continued tranquilly, as if he were trying to take her into his confidence, as one would an agreeable outsider. "A fellow who has had no home and no ties for the best part of his life never wants to settle down."

He let his eyes wander over the landscape, from which the light was slowly withdrawing. Already in the paling sky the stars had begun to appear.

"Take those stars, for instance," he said. "How small and hard they are! You should see them in Africa; they are like great white lamps."

Then he turned to her quickly, with apparent ease. She had not moved from her position by the fence, as if she were immobilized by what he had said and what it meant to her.

"You see, I have made some good friends out there, and I want to go back and see them."

He put out his hand frankly, and, still smiling in a purely friendly fashion, said:

"Wish me good luck and good-by. You remember what your mammy told you seventeen years ago—that John Tremaine had run away? Just think of him as having run away again—or, better still, don't think of him at all. He is not worth it."

He completed his work like an artist. He accomplished what he wished to do; he hurt her profoundly; he awakened in her all her pride. Above all came to her the horrible certainty that he knew she cared for him and that he was disenchanting her as far as he knew how to do. It was unbearable.

Tremaine saw pain and chagrin bring back the color to her face. He knew that she almost hated him in that moment, and that for the time being he had succeeded in his work. She thrust both her hands into the pockets of her rough jacket and stood straightly, like a charming little soldier, with her blond head up. The hair they had

cut off after her accident had grown again in rings around her ears and brows. She was angry, wretched, hurt as she had never thought any one could hurt her. Even the fact that she would not see him again was clouded by her indignation.

"I do not think you have won your title of 'the big Tremaine,'" she said, with spirit. "I do not think you have won it. Riches aren't everything. It isn't everything to be a millionaire. There are other riches— You ask me to wish you good luck. I hope you will find people in South Africa who will make you happy—whom you can make happy."

He realized in a second more that she had turned right about face and left him. She was walking fast across the meadow up to Malvern by the little path, and he was letting her go. His gun Jeaned against the fence; the dead rabbits hung limply where he had slung them. He took out a cigarette, lit it, and stood smoking, watching Isobel's figure until it disappeared.

Desolation came upon him greater than any he had known in the desert, and yet he was within reach of the realization of a man's dearest hope. He went back to the house slowly. He saw the smoke from the kitchen chimney rising languidly on the quiet air. The days were drawing near to the Christmas holidays. The servants and his mother had already begun to decorate with holly and with evergreen. He had made the dilapidated old home into a dignified homestead. His mother's future was secure. He had once more established a hearth. Holidays would once again have a meaning here. He had done the thing a man likes best to do—made a home. He thought of other Christmases, during those fifteen years of wandering—Christmases in mining camps, on the plains, in the African desert, in strange cities, where he had no family and no home. As far as

he was concerned, he had not been able to make himself one.

As he came up into the property, he saw that the barn doors were open. Nolan was telling one of his imitable Irish yarns to the negroes. John could hear his rich brogue and the negroes' soft guffaws. He heard laughter sounding from the kitchen. Mammy Chloe's voice was loud and gay. The odor of good things cooking came out onto the fresh air as he passed the kitchen door. His dogs came running out to greet him, springing on him, sniffing at the rabbits. They followed him up the porch steps, keeping at his heels.

As he came into the hall, he heard voices and laughter—his mother's laugh—and his heart thrilled to the sound of the merriment. He realized that the place had been invaded, that his Northern family had come. He went in, like Esau from the chase, to where the sons of his brother had, he felt, taken his birthright. As he entered the living room, he saw a group before the big fireplace. His mother stood there in a violet-colored dress, the firelight touching her hair and the lace across her breast. She had an arm round the neck of each of her grandsons—two charming little boys. She was talking down to them as he had seen her laugh and talk with David when they were children. He supposed that Julia Tremaine was there, but he did not see her. His mother's voice cried:

"David! Roger! This is your Uncle John!"

The three moved toward him out of the firelight. He heard his new title called by sweet, high voices: "Uncle John! Uncle John!" He was seized upon by four young arms vigorously, authoritatively. He was conscious that a boy on either side of him was talking about the rabbits and the dogs in great delight. Roger, the younger, held up his face to be kissed.

"Uncle John, may we go shooting with you? Davy has got a rifle. I am to have one. May we, Uncle John? What bully dogs! Hie! What's their names? Did you only shoot two rabbits?"

They both tore out of the room after the dogs. John saw that there was no one there but his mother. Her eyes were on him with a bright expression of happiness and pride. He believed it to be the reflection of his pleasure in the children.

"The boys have talked of nothing but seeing you, John. They have been wild to see their new uncle." She came up to him, laying her hand lightly on the sleeve of his corduroy coat, the brightness still on her face. "Their distinguished uncle," she said.

He looked down upon her from his height. She seemed to him very lovely and very frail. He saw now that the light on her face shone for him. It was unmistakably for him. Not for the boys, not for younger generations, not for elder brothers' sons, but for him—the man who, because of her worship for the elder son, had no birthright.

But his mind was absorbed by the figure of another woman—of a younger woman—of Isobel, disappearing over the little rise of pasture land that lay between Malvern and Riverside.

CHAPTER XXIX.

John could not escape his nephews, nor did he try to do so, although they were the sons of the woman who had made him suffer—the sons of a brother he had not loved. They were both Tremaines, strongly marked with the family characteristics, good-looking, manly little fellows and first-rate companions.

He was shaving one evening. One boy sat astride the foot of his bed; the other, his elbows on the bureau, gazed with naïve admiration at his big uncle.

"Uncle John, you're one of the dark Tremaines, aren't you?"

"It looks like it, old chap."

"Neither Davy nor I will be, both-eration! I should like," said the boy from the bed, "to be absolutely and exactly like you, Uncle John, when I grow up."

"Better choose another model, Roger; Mr. Leavitt, for example."

"Huh, Uncle John, an old man?"

"He was once young, Roger."

"Yep, but I never knew him then, and I guess I choose Napoleon."

"Drop my razor, Davy."

"I think I could just shave a little bit off my upper lip."

"Drop it, I say!"

"Uncle John," said little Roger, "when I said I hated blondes the other day, I forgot about Miss Isobel."

"You did?"

"Yes. We used to see her when we were down here last time. Where is she, Uncle John?"

"I don't know."

"Don't you know her quite well, Uncle John?"

"We are neighbors."

"Isn't she a corker?"

Tremaine looked down into the boy's eyes.

David, though only twelve, was tall and well set up. He had taken possession of his uncle's shaving brush.

"Why don't you marry Miss Isobel, Uncle John?"

"That's an idea, Davy."

"Neighbors always marry in books." Seizing his uncle's arm, he laughed and insisted: "Will you, will you?" at the risk of causing John to cut himself with his razor.

"Look out!" exclaimed his uncle. "Go easy, old man!"

Roger, who had been very quiet, now said from the bed:

"I like my grandmother best of anybody."

He appeared, arrayed in Tremaine's

black coat, which trailed between his legs to the floor.

"You fellows had better go down and see your grandmother," said John, hastily finishing his toilet at the stand. "Get out of that coat, Roger. And if you muss my shirt, I'll wallop you, my boy."

"You're frightfully particular about your clothes," said the little fellow.

Tremaine laughed aloud and picked up his clothes, which he had rescued. He opened the door of the room.

"Now you get out and let me finish dressing."

Just then mammy appeared in the doorway, and the boys rushed at her wildly.

"Hie, mammy! Come and barricade Uncle John with us!"

"Fo' de Lawd!" she panted under the assault. "Lemme be, lemme be, yo' little debbils!"

"Tell us about Uncle John and fath'r when they were boys like us, mammy."

"Lak yo'-all!" she sniffed scornfully, looking over the blond heads at John. "Ma chillun wasn't nevah lak yo'-all. Dey was gemmen; you's jest boys."

Tremaine finished dressing with as much care as if he were not to dine alone with his mother. On the bureau lay a great bunch of violets. He had been raising them successfully under glass, and mammy had just fetched him in, with pride, this great bunch from the greenhouse. He fastened a few in the lapel of his coat.

As they sat together after dinner, he and his mother, the door opened softly, and a small boy in night clothes stood there, red-cheeked, his eyes bright, but heavy with sleep. He made a leap and landed in his uncle's lap.

"Listen, Uncle John! Come up and sit on our bed in the dark. Please do!"

"Go upstairs directly," said his grandmother severely. "You will catch cold."

Roger's hot cheek was close to his

uncle's; the firelight gleamed in his eyes.

"Hark!" said Mrs. Tremaine. "I hear wheels on the driveway."

"No, granny, it's the wind," said the child. "I hear it all night long."

"Your stories are too exciting for them, John."

"No, no, grandmother! They're bully!"

"I'll take him upstairs," said John indulgently.

"Nonsense! You will do nothing of the kind. Let him go alone."

Roger slipped down, ran over to the door, and said, from under his shock of fair hair: "Davy thinks mother is the prettiest, but I think Miss Isobel's the prettiest, Uncle John. Are you going to marry her?"

He ran out, beckoning to John from the hall and from the stairs.

When he had gone, his grandmother said in a low tone:

"You heard what little Roger said?"

John's heart was as hard as a stone within him.

"You may spare yourself the trouble of speaking to me on the subject, mother."

But she replied with spirit: "I love Isobel as my own child." She leaned forward. "You may ruin her life," she went on. "It has gone too far. She is unhappy. I believe she loves you."

"Nonsense!" said Tremaine; and added: "If she does, she will get over it. Others have."

"Oh!" said his mother. "You are cruel!"

"I think," said Tremaine cruelly, watching her, "that if she knew, it would disenchant her. I can't imagine Isobel Malvern loving a thief." Raising his eyes, he looked at his mother sharply. "Will you tell her?"

"I tell the disgrace of my son!"

"If it would solve the problem?"

"Never!"

"I am glad," he said simply. "We

might depute Julia to tell her, when she arrives."

"You insult her." Mrs. Tremaine, who had risen, moved to and fro slowly, her cheeks burning, her whole soul in agitation.

John said, still watching: "There is Sam Leavitt."

"How *dare* you, John!"

"He has never refused to stand by the family yet."

"Do you call that standing by the family?" asked his mother.

CHAPTER XXX.

Mrs. Tremaine was invited to pay a visit at the house of a mutual friend where Julia was breaking her journey South. They were to return to Riverside together. John was left with the boys for a fortnight, and they were great companions to him. His mother's absence made the place lonely and strange, and he felt restless and dissatisfied. He found himself wondering, as he walked with Julia Tremaine's sons, what the mother was like.

For the first time since his return to Riverside, he permitted himself to think about Julia Tremaine. Now and again, when he would pass old landmarks—the pasture, the scene of their parting—an image of her would attempt to force itself on his brain; but with his strong will he brushed it away.

He asked Leavitt: "What is the measure of a man's soul? Do you know, Sam?"

The lawyer stroked his chin before he replied in his pleasant drawl:

"My dear John, just as high as he can think, I reckon."

"As much," said Tremaine, "as he can endure."

Leavitt shook his head.

"No; barbarians and savages can give us examples of brute endurance. It's something else."

They were leaning together on the

bar of the south pasture, side by side. Behind them the river, flushed all along with the winter sunset, flowed between its red banks, and before them each window of the old house was as red as a rose from the reflection.

"Don't imagine, John," said Leavitt, "that I don't know how hard it was for you to come back to Virginia."

"It was," said John, "exchanging peace of mind for something that is akin to hell."

"I can partly understand," said the lawyer slowly.

And John replied musingly: "I don't believe you have the slightest idea of what I mean."

"Why don't you return, since it's that way?" asked the older Virginian.

"Since it's what way?"

"I suggest your going only for *your* sake, not for hers," said Leavitt.

"For hers?" John repeated the words quickly.

"For Molly's," said the lawyer. "It would pretty near break her heart. For your own sake, I think you ought to go."

John stared slightly, and the sunset light was warm upon his face.

"When it gets too much for me, I shall go back to South Africa."

Leavitt looked up at him.

"I can't see that anything would be too much for you, John."

"Running away," said John Tremaine, "is a mighty poor way to solve problems, after all. I ran away once before, and while I made shift to construct myself a new life, and, as I said, obtained comparative peace, I should not find that peace there now if I returned."

Leavitt looked at him seriously.

"Something in Virginia has irreversibly destroyed it?"

Tremaine did not reply. On either side of him his nephews had taken their places, and Roger's arm was linked within his uncle's.

"I wonder what Mrs. David Tremaine is like?" John said aloud. And little David answered: "Mother?" in the tone a boy uses for only one word until he is a man. "Mother? Why, she's a corker, Uncle John."

"Ah," said his uncle approvingly, "that's the way to speak, old chap."

"And," added little Roger, in his dreamy voice, "she must have been pretty when she was young."

Both men laughed, and the boys jumped down from the fence, on which they had climbed in order to be on a more equal height with their big uncle. The four walked over to the house together in the half darkness. Hanging on John as if his arms were the branches of some high tree to which they aspired, the boys cried:

"Sing, Uncle John! Let's all sing, Mr. Leavitt," and all four stamped on, singing:

"There's a light in the meadows shining in the sun,
And it shines on the old cabin door."

"So they came up to the house, but did not go in together. As they entered, mammy caught the boys.

"Doan' yo' t'ink fer to go in der paaler wid dem ombrageotus shoes, chil-lun. Yo' stay right yeah an' mammy'll get yo' slippers. Go 'long in, Marse John, ef yer feet ain't wet."

Leavitt had left them, to go home by the highroad, and John saw his nephews struggling in mammy's powerful grasp as he went on toward the parlor.

It was lit. Now that his mother was away, he spent his evenings in the dining room, where he spread out his maps of the country on the table and ruminated over his mines and their workings in a cloud of smoke. Now he saw a light from the parlor shining out into the hall. Some one was playing on the piano, which had never been opened since he had come from South Africa. The same tune he had been

singing with Roger and Davy was being softly played, and a woman's voice was singing it—rich and full, with a peculiar sweet quality, with the terribly poignant appeal to men's hearts that some women's voices can make.

John stood there in the hallway, transfixed. His mouth grew hard as steel, his jaw set, and his eyes clouded. One after another the scenes of his past rushed on him with a terrible force. His heart rose to his throat; he drew a deep breath; the singing ceased.

He hesitated a moment, and then went in.

The woman who had been sitting at the piano rose slowly and stood where she was. She wore a traveling dress and a traveling hat. Under the light from the piano lamp John saw her plainly, distinctly, every detail of her. 'Twas a cruel vision, bringing up the past he had believed buried, making real before his eyes a some one he could almost have wished dead for the grief she had caused him. She wore a black velvet coat, and a small hat of soft fur came down upon her hair. She lifted her eyes and looked straight at John. Just such a picture of her, standing straight and challenging, with her handsome head held up and her big, dark eyes full on him, he had year by year put sternly from his mind. Now she stood there before him, living, triumphant—a link so strong as to be a bitter bond with a past he hated. All the intervening years seemed one long sacrifice to her.

Julia Tremaine, with both hands on the piano lid, waited for him to come up to her. She was sure of her beauty, sure that she had grown more lovely, and that she need not be afraid of his judgment of her physical charms. As John, however, did not come forward, she left the piano and moved toward him, with both her hands held out. Half smiling, with a subtle comprehension of

what the moment was, "John!" she whispered. "John!" and waited. She could not guess what was going on in the man's mind.

At the first sight of her, all his hate and resentment faded. For one brief moment, one brief second, she was only the woman he had so deeply loved. Her singing voice, as he had heard it in the hallway, had stirred him profoundly. Now the sudden sight of her—her nearness, her calling his name aloud as in the early days of his exile he had used to think she was calling him in his dreams—all this made him for a moment forget everything but the fact that he was actually seeing her again.

"Aren't you even going to speak to me, John?"

Then, as sharply, the spell broke, and between him and her, between him and this woman, came the face of his brother, the remembrance of the past, the truth of what had been.

John put out his hand frankly; a light broke over his face, which had been as set as a graven face.

"Of course I'm going to speak to you. How do you do? We did not expect you till to-morrow. Is my mother here? Why are you left alone?"

Mrs. David Tremaine bit her lip and shook her head slightly, as if she said: "I understand your emotion. It is great and you won't give way."

"Mrs. Tremaine is upstairs," she said, then added softly: "Isn't it strange to meet like this?"

"Like what?" he asked shortly. "Nothing is really so strange as people think. Things turn out to be rather natural, after all. It's only ourselves who are strange."

He laughed, delighted that he could look at her without the least shade of embarrassment.

"You must be dusty and tired, hungry, perhaps," he said practically. "It's tea time. We have tea here—that's

strange, if you like! We didn't have tea, did we, in the old days? That's an English custom. I brought it here from the heart of Africa, where we had tea at five o'clock, no matter if the natives rose or the Kongo States mutinied."

The boys burst into the room and rushed at their mother in their catapult fashion. Mrs. Tremaine kissed them. The interruption was a relief. John watched her. She was a good mother; so much was to her credit. He had already discovered her boys' chivalrous admiration for her. She was lovely as she bent over them, proud of them, proud of being the mother of two such sons. He fancied she was thinking: "I have cheated him out of this, as well. Such sons might have been his."

"There!" cried Roger, turning to his uncle, one arm around his mother's waist. "Didn't I tell you she was a corker, Uncle John? And what did we write you, mother? Uncle John's a dead shot. He hits the bull's-eye nine times out of ten, and I've a real rifle, haven't I, Uncle John? And Uncle John's the most popular man in the South. I'm awfully sorry, but I'm afraid I'll have to live down here in Virginia, mother."

Mrs. Tremaine laughed, and John laughed over the children's heads, and their eyes met in a more natural glance.

"I congratulate you, Julia," he said.

And she answered with *empressement*: "I'm glad you're friends."

CHAPTER XXXI.

The following morning, when he waked, he came into consciousness aware that a great change had taken place in his environment. He had passed a restless night, and toward daylight had fallen into a heavy sleep, out of which he was awakened slowly by some one singing. He heard the village clock in Redlands strike the hour, and

when the sound had ceased, the singing voice continued under his window: "I want your love to follow me, follow me home—"

It was Julia Tremaine, and he wondered why she was out so early, and the thought suggested itself that she, too, had passed a restless night, but, unlike himself, had not caught up with sleep. She sang through the first verse of the song, then interrupted it, to call to her children:

"Davy! Roger!"

His window was open. He heard the young, fresh voices of his nephews:

"Mother, there are motors in the stables!"— "It isn't a garage; it's a stable—lots nicer!"— "And there are bully horses! Tom lifted me up on the backs of all of them!"— "And he did me, too, mother!"— "Such a bully Irishman, mother! You ought to hear his brogue!"— "I'm stuck on Virginia, mother!"— "Isn't it great at Uncle John's, mother?"— "Isn't Uncle John—"

"Hush, hush!" And the boys were led away.

But she had known that she was standing under his window, of course. Had she stood there purposely and sung to waken him? That would be like her! Was it like her? What did he know of Julia Tremaine? Julia Cameron he had known, as a young man knows a very young woman about whom there is little to know.

He was fully awake, and lay upon his bed, his hands under his head, unwilling to enter immediately into the complexity that the days now held for him, unwilling for a little while to face the change.

He was now under the same roof with the woman who had meant to him the awakening of his first passion. She had been disloyal to him; nevertheless, after leaving Virginia, he had loved her for years. In South Africa he had closed the doors upon the aching fresh-

ness, upon the morbid sharpness of his past: But it had been long before he could think of Julia without suffering, and his final disassociation from her had been the result of a determination as strong as was the rest of his character.

Now what had she become?

As if to answer him, he heard again the call, "Mother!" and realized that she had justified her existence.

She was the mother of the children.

As he lay outstretched upon his bed, his hands under his head, he saw before him the simplicity of his small room; he had not changed his quarters, though he had added to them. On the chimneypiece lay his gloves, his pipes—a man's belongings. There was not a single photograph or anything to indicate a close personal relation with another. He had not been able to bring anything personal into his life.

David had founded a family. David had taken from him the woman he had chosen. He would be impersonal to her. He would not harbor the feeling of bitterness she had awakened. She should be to him nothing but the mother of his nephews and his brother's widow. He could ignore her. His life was a busy one. There was no reason why she should in any wise affect it. He said this to himself, but knew the change in his environment was there.

An hour later, he walked through the little stretch of woodland that lay at the foot of the meadows between the property and the mines. The morning post had brought him letters that gave the impersonal turn to his thoughts that he wanted. One was a strong, vigorous appeal from Brandegee, reading almost like a command, that he should enter active politics. Another was from the Democratic Club, in Richmond, urging him in much the same fashion, but with greater deference, to take the nomination.

Since coming back to Virginia, there had stirred in him the strongest affection for the State. He was accustomed to have people seek him and turn to him. His back seemed built for burdens. Everywhere, all through his career, he had been bearing them. In South Africa, his advice had been largely asked. He was accustomed to consider with patience and kindness other people's problems. Indeed, the broad way in which he had entered into affairs that in no wise affected him had been one of the reasons why he was known as "the big Tremaine"—perhaps a better reason than the other, which put him high because of his material control of millions of pounds.

Here in Virginia, since he had appeared in Richmond and gone about among the men there, from the very first day he had been sought out, appealed to, called upon; and, possessed as he was by strong magnetism, he could not help but feel the power that he exerted over his friends and understand what, given the opportunity, he could do for his own people.

Every one of the demands upon him here had brought with it its peculiar satisfaction. The fact that he could win, notwithstanding the opinion that Leavitt and his mother and Malvern held of him, could not but be a satisfaction. Each day and each hour put upon his career and his life before these people the seal of what he was. He knew it.

When he went out of doors, thinking of these things, he again heard Davy's voice calling, "Mother, mother!" and, looking up, he saw Julia Tremaine coming through the woods, her sons on either side of her.

He saw her before she saw him. She had stopped with the boys to bend down and observe a rabbit hole, and he stood watching the group. His first impulse was to turn about and go back before she had seen him. Then he found him-

self drawn to her by a feeling of curiosity.

The three stood in a little opening in the woods—an opening like a cup in the heart of the pines, filled and flooded with sunlight. As Julia bent with her boys, he saw that her figure was young and charming; the lines were more suave than in her girlhood. She was kneeling on one knee on the pine-covered earth; the boys were on all fours beside her, peering down into the rabbit hole. As the day was mild and soft, she wore no coat. Her dress was black and close fitting, but she had picked up, before leaving the house, a scarf of Mrs. Tremaine's and had thrown it about her shoulders, and she wore a little hat belonging to her mother-in-law, for garden and country use, its violets and delicate ribbons lightening the effect of her black dress. Her sleeves stopped at her elbows.

As she knelt in the warm sunlight, her arms behind her back, white, round, and appealing in their charm, the darker woods around her and the blond heads of her children at her side, the picture she made could not fail to appeal to the eyes of a man in whom love of beauty and admiration for women were keen.

"It's no use watching, boys," he heard her say. "The rabbit's gone down to his family. He won't come out again."

"It's Br'er Rabbit, isn't it, mother?" Roger said. "Mammy will tell us about him. I dare say he's up to some of his clever tricks under the ground. I wish we could see 'l!"

Tremaine came slowly around the curve of the path, and before Julia had time to rise, she saw him. He could not but be flattered by the red that sprang into her cheeks and by her expression of pleased surprise.

"Oh, Uncle John!" Both his nephews rushed toward him. "There's a great, big, fat rabbit just gone down into the hole! If you only had your gun!"

She said, "Good morning," and held out her hand. "How nice to meet you out here like this, John! We have been all through the woods. Riverside is wonderfully transformed."

"Yes," he said. "Nothing stands still; everything changes."

He turned about and walked along with them, although he had intended going on to the mines.

"No," she said; "there *are* things that are not affected by the years."

"I suppose you refer to feelings, but you are wrong. They are the most uncertain and capricious of all things."

"Oh, no," she said quickly. "They deepen and grow more profound."

"Uncle John," said one of his nephews, "mammy says you're going to run for president."

And Julia said: "I am so interested in this campaign and the politics of Virginia. I wanted David to take an active part. He should have done so. Of course you will accept the nomination, John?"

It was evident to him that she intended to ignore their mutual past. She was smiling at him frankly, as if to say: "I've come back after years into your environment. Enjoy me; approve of me! You see that I have developed well. Expect much of me—I can give it."

"Why didn't David go into politics?" he asked abruptly; and added: "Since you wished it?"

"He was devoted to his profession."

"I'm sure your influence on him must have been enormous."

She shook her head. "There you're wrong. He did exactly as he liked."

During the first few days after her arrival, he saw her everywhere. He was somewhat curious as to the relations between his mother and Julia, and saw that they were not the same as between Isobel and Mrs. Tremaine.

Julia had never won her mother-in-law, and he could understand that there was in the relationship something of jealousy. It had been hard for Mrs. Tremaine to relinquish her elder son.

With her children, Julia was delightful, and during the first few days they followed her everywhere. He could hear their gay voices across the hall as they told her of "Uncle John," and Tremaine grew annoyed at the fact that there was nothing to annoy him in the discreet presence of his brother's widow.

When he realized that her presence was pleasing to him, he felt a subtle sense of irritation. Why could she not have stayed in the North? He could have solved her financial problems for her better at a distance. He got the habit of going early to the mines and lunching there; Nolan would fetch him sandwiches and beer. And he created for himself duties that would prolong his absences and exile him from the homestead.

One afternoon, as Leavitt was starting out on his daily pilgrimage, John surprised him by riding up and asking for a few moments of his time. Leavitt magnanimously held the door open for his guest, who at any other time would have been welcome. The lawyer put down the bunch of white violets that he held on the table.

"I won't keep you five seconds, Leavitt," said John.

"Come in, come in!" said the lawyer. "Twenty-five, if you like."

But the poor gentleman saw, by the way John had begun to walk up and down the little hallway, his hands behind his back, his riding whip in his hand, that he was not likely to see Mrs. Tremaine that afternoon. Tremaine began abruptly:

"I told you when I came that I should return to South Africa. Now I want you to help me to wind up my affairs, for I am getting back in a fortnight."

"Why," said the lawyer, "it will just about kill Molly!"

John laughed. "You think of nothing but the woman always!" he exclaimed. "What a faithful man you are! It did not kill my mother when I went away before, and I am leaving her in rather better circumstances now. I want to make my will and give her Riverside and a handsome income. I shall make a bequest to Chloe. Will you put these things in shape for me as soon as possible, old man?"

Leavitt placed himself on the window seat, whence he could see the road, where John's horse was being led up and down by a negro boy.

"Running away again, eh, John?" he said, nodding at his companion.

"What do you mean?"

"Looks very much as if you could not face the music," said the older man. "And yet I reckon you have come up against harder propositions than this in your wanderings."

Tremaine shrugged.

"It seems too bad," said the lawyer, "when you've at last got a chance of making good."

"Making good?"

Leavitt nodded. "To your mother, for all these dreadful years."

Tremaine swore under his breath. Always of her! He said sharply, stopping in his walk to confront the lawyer:

"For God's sake, man, think just a little of *me*!"

"Perhaps," pursued Leavitt obstinately, "it's just as well that there is some one to think only of her."

"She is fortunate."

Leavitt smiled. "It never occurred to me to call Molly that," he said, "until you came home."

"She has her daughter-in-law," said John; "she has her grandchildren; she has a fortune, and the devotion of the faithfulest soul on the face of the earth——"

"Ah, yes!" Leavitt smiled. "By the way, I have a letter from Isobel." He touched the pocket of his coat and drew it out.

Tremaine put up his hand. "Never mind that," he said shortly. "It's a letter to you; it can't interest me, and I have come to talk business."

"You're a singular man, John Tremaine!" said the lawyer.

And, to his surprise, Tremaine, lifting his eyes to Leavitt, replied: "I am a damned lonely one!"

There ensued a moment's silence between them; after which Leavitt, who had not taken in the full significance of the fact that Tremaine, whom he had grown to love, was leaving Virginia, said daringly:

"Why don't you tell her, my boy?"

Tremaine laughed. "I should have given you credit, Leavitt, for more Southern pride than you express in what you have said to-day."

"Oh, I don't know," said the lawyer, with equable indifference. "Pride is a poor horse to ride of a cold night. I don't think I have so much pride as other qualities. I think a woman should have every chance to know the man she loves."

"Come!" said John almost fiercely. "You don't know what you are saying! What do you mean by 'the man she loves'? I am a matter of complete indifference to Miss Malvern."

Leavitt shook his head. "Oh, no!" he said. "Poor little girl!"

"We'll leave her out of the question, if you please," said his companion roughly, "and keep to the one in hand. I have told you what I intend to do. Now, if you will be so good——"

There was a knock at Leavitt's front door. Neither man had seen the visitor arrive, and Leavitt himself, springing up from the window seat, opened the door for Mr. Malvern.

Malvern did not at once see that

Leavitt was not alone, and he began in a hearty voice :

"Glad to find you at home! How do you do, my dear Leavitt?"

He wrung the lawyer's hand with much effusion. His face was excited, and Leavitt, as he greeted his neighbor, saw in him a transformation so great as to be explained in a man's aspect by only one of two things—a great and sudden rise in fortune, or an unexpected happiness. Malvern put his hat on the table, threw down his gloves, threw back his overcoat, and, seating himself in a chair, looked up and said eagerly :

"I want a few minutes of your time, Sam. Sit down with me, my old friend." Then he saw John standing by the window, riding crop in hand, and the whole expression of his face changed.

"How do you do?" he said shortly. "I didn't see you. I thought I was alone with Sam."

Tremaine's pleasures in life might be said to be few. At all events, he felt so, and he did not intend to deny himself this one. He bade Malvern "good afternoon" with the utmost graciousness, and, instead of taking his leave, settled himself comfortably on the window ledge.

"I came in to see Leavitt myself on a matter of business, and I presume that you have done the same."

Malvern glanced at him. Dislike and distrust were in his feelings, as well as a certain fear; and it also angered him that he should be so conscious of John's power, that he should find anything in this man to impel his attention. But if John felt that this moment promised him a certain enjoyment, Malvern felt that it promised him as well a certain satisfaction. He turned to the lawyer and addressed himself directly to him.

"I want you to come with me to Richmond, Sam, if you can, this after-

noon. I have some business of rather an important character to transact, and I want you to handle it for me."

Leavitt waited. It was a drama to him of poignant interest—a play whose dénouement he knew beforehand and at which he was at present an unwilling spectator.

"A very extraordinary thing has happened," said Malvern, the excitement beating back to his voice. He picked up his gloves off the table and drew them through his fingers. "A very extraordinary thing!"

Tremaine's eyes were bent upon him as he talked, with a look that to a reader of human hearts was not inscrutable. It was the extraordinary beneficence that shines on the human face when one contemplates an act of generosity for which one can never reap the reward.

Malvern paused and waited, his attention so evidently given to the older man that a sensitive third party should have understood that his presence was undesired. Leavitt, who wished to say nothing, was obliged to speak.

"Why, I am afraid," he said, in his soft-cadence voice, "that it's rather late to go to Richmond to-day, Redmond. It's close on to supper time."

As if he quite knew that the crux of the matter would be arrived at with difficulty before him, Tremaine from his corner said :

"Mr. Malvern, I want you to let me be the first person to congratulate you."

Malvern turned upon him almost ferociously. "What do you mean, sir?" he exclaimed. He turned around in his chair and faced the quiet individual around whom the shadows of the room seemed to fall.

"Leavitt doesn't know," John said easily, "but men in coal all know. You see, I am especially interested in the country hereabouts. I heard something of the matter in Washington last week."

Malvern turned his eyes from him, almost with a snap, to his friend.

"It seems that Malvern isn't quite as poor a property as we thought, Sam," he said simply. "As a matter of fact, I have accepted an offer of a million dollars for the waste tract just above the old house."

He waited, his enthusiasm, his excitement, the fact that he was a rich man overbearing everything else in the moment. The sudden change from poverty and distress to riches had almost unnerved him. His hands trembled as he fingered his gloves. There was fever in his cheeks and in his eyes. He had expected to go down to the grave a poor, unsuccessful old man. In the twinkling of an eye, his whole existence had altered. He could hold up his head with the best of them in his set. So suddenly had this bonanza come to him that he had not reasoned about it. The man who had just left him at Malvern House had scarcely driven away before he had called for his trap to drive to Redlands.

The moment was an extremely trying one to Leavitt. He faced something that he disapproved and against which he had no voice. He knew that it was expected of him to show enthusiasm and delight. He could not look at Tremaine.

"I am mighty glad, Redmond," he said sincerely. "Nobody is gladder than I."

But Malvern was in no condition to observe shades of feeling in others. He was beside himself with excitement and delight.

"I stopped at the post office," he said, "to send a telegram to my daughter. She shall come home at once. That little enterprise is fortunately at an end."

There were a dozen questions on Leavitt's lips that he would have liked to ask, but he asked none. Malvern went on, not to Tremaine, but at him.

"I have sold it to a company in Washington," he said. "I dare say I was unwise to accept the first offer, but I am no business man any more, Sam; and I want to put all my affairs in your hands."

Leavitt shook his head.

"Redmond," he said, "I'd like to oblige you, but"—and he took the decision as if clients were besieging his doors—"I am thinking very seriously of going out of business."

Malvern stared at him, then laughed. "Nonsense!" he said. "You will go into my business and it will keep you occupied."

He rose; a fever of nervousness marked all his actions. Curiosity was too strong for him, and he asked of John grudgingly, as if much against his will:

"May I know how you happen to be informed of this, Mr. Tremaine, so soon?"

John came forward, taking up his hat and riding gloves. His moment, which he had purchased with a million dollars, had come to an end. There would be for Isobel no more working for a living. He had made her rich; he had solved the problem of her future.

"There are no secrets in mining cliques, Mr. Malvern," he said easily. "My company is pretty well informed of the outlook in the district."

"If you wanted to buy my property," said the old man acidly, "it is too late now."

John bowed. "So I see," he said. "If the Blythe Mountain Company wants it, it will have to pay a big price."

CHAPTER XXXII.

John had succeeded in carving out his own existence with a master hand. From the moment when he had set out on his lonely career as a very young man, he had admitted in his pathways

no obstacles. The words of the bank president that had affected him so profoundly were commonplace enough; but in the life of this man they had played a more extraordinary and subtle part than a profounder exordium might.

"Admit no obstacles." John had admitted none, and the result had been great material success. In his life in South Africa, women had played a secondary part. He had been too deeply wounded, he had grown too sentimentally bitter, to love again easily, and he met all women with distrust.

In what daily intercourse there was between Julia Tremaine and himself, he was obliged to change his opinion of her more or less. She had developed into a different woman from the one he had expected to see. And while he made up his mind that he would not understand her, would not give himself the trouble to study her, he was, nevertheless, impressed by her beyond his will to be. With his mother, he felt that she labored under a disadvantage. He knew Mrs. Tremaine's prejudices and how hard it was to win an inch of the way with her. She was cold with Julia, never unbending; whereas Mrs. David Tremaine, gracious and sweet, was almost humble in her affectionate devotion to her mother-in-law.

They discussed the change in the Malvern fortunes in the living room, after dinner. Leavitt had dined with them, staying *sans cérémonie* at the close of his belated afternoon call on Mrs. Tremaine.

Mrs. Tremaine accepted the news with more calm than John would have expected, and Leavitt, who was completely in the secret, stated the facts with cold lack of enthusiasm. The greatest impression was made upon Mrs. David Tremaine.

"Isobel will be able now," she said, "to make a brilliant marriage."

"And," Mrs. Tremaine remarked, "Isobel will return."

John said nothing.

To Mrs. Tremaine, John's attitude toward his brother's widow was inexplicable. It revolted her that the rich son should apparently take so little interest in the financial needs of his brother's widow. In her eyes, he had before him a glorious opportunity to repay now in full a sacred debt. Nor could she understand Julia's attitude toward John—her extreme consideration, her desire to charm and please. It was unsympathetic to the proud, reserved mother. She had known nothing of her younger son's sentimental interest in Julia Cameron, for their engagement had not been made public. She thought to herself:

"John must now do a great kindness. It will be only a return for a far greater one—for a moral and unforgettable kindness in John's great moment of need. Can money—ah, the vile thing!—can money play such a terribly important part in human lives? He must repay David through Julia." But she did not know how to appeal to her son.

It was at this moment of her anxiety for her son's children—keener than her anxiety for her son's wife—that she contrasted terribly her two sons. David had been a child to her until the last. David had consulted her in everything, had appealed to her. Full of imagination and very expansive, he had continued to charm his mother until the end. Now, as she recalled the fact that he had been unsuccessful in the last years and had left behind him no such material record as her younger son was making, in spite of the blot on John's name, she grew jealous for David and doubly jealous for his children. Mrs. Tremaine had no idea that her daughter-in-law knew anything of John's misdeed. She could not for a moment have supposed that David would have told of his brother's crime.

"Julia," she said to her daughter-in-law, "you must speak to John."

"Not," said Mrs. David Tremaine, "if I starved in the street."

"You *must* speak to him, for the boys' sake."

"It would come better from you."

Mrs. Tremaine compressed her lips and made no reply.

"It would be bitter enough," said Julia, "to accept help from him."

Mrs. Tremaine, looking at her quickly, asked: "Why bitter?"

And Julia realized that her mother-in-law was ignorant of her relations with John in the past.

Julia suggested hesitatingly: "Would not Mr. Leavitt—"

But her mother-in-law said, shaking her head: "John would take it badly, I think, from any one but you."

As they spoke, Tremaine himself came into the living room, and Mrs. Tremaine, acting on an impulse, beckoned him.

"John, we were speaking of you. Won't you sit here for a moment? I was saying to Julia that since she came down we have not talked together about"—she hesitated; how strange it was that it should be so hard to speak to him the name of his brother!—"about David's affairs." She stiffened a little as the name passed her lips—the beloved name; and John saw her suffering.

Julia was sitting by her mother-in-law on the sofa, and as Mrs. Tremaine spoke, she covered Julia's hand with her own, as if she were taking her under her protection. It was the only caress John ever saw his mother voluntarily give to her daughter-in-law.

John stood before them, looking down on them both quietly and coldly. Both women felt that he would be a man of whom it would be difficult to ask a favor.

"John," said his mother quietly, "Julia will not put the case before you, but I am going to do so. You can understand that it is impossible for me

to live at Riverside in luxury—a luxury to which I often feel I have no right—while David's sons and his wife—"

Her younger son did not remove his eyes from her face. There was no emotion that could cross it that did not touch this man, to whom she had been all his life both unjust and unkind. She was appealing to the outcast, to the forgotten, neglected black sheep. He crossed his hands behind his back and stood waiting, as if determined that whatever words were spoken should be spoken by her.

Many things rose to Mrs. Tremaine's lips, but she was so instinctively loyal to her own that before a third person she would not speak a word that would put John in the wrong. As soon as he saw the suggestion in her eyes of something that looked like tears, he removed his eyes from her face and glanced at his sister-in-law.

Julia sat in the corner of the sofa, a little away from her mother-in-law, one hand and arm lying on the red brocade of the lounge. She was looking away from both of them, and the expression on her face was the most serious he had ever seen her wear. All women were to him helpless, dependent creatures, in constant need of protection; and this woman was the mother of two sons. Her breath rose and fell a little unevenly; she was agitated, and he knew that there was distress in her eyes.

Her black dress fitted her like the sheath of a flower, after the fashion of the times. She had been a pretty girl, and she was a very handsome woman. She was more beautiful even than she had given promise of becoming. Social experience had given her brilliance, and he could tell by the expression of her mouth, when she was not conscious of being observed, that she had suffered. She sat now with her head a little bowed, her eyes on the hand that clasped Mrs. Tremaine's.

The picture of the two women on the sofa awakened in him mingled feelings. Their absolute dependence on him, his mastery over their fate, unconsciously gratified him, but it was bitter to him to feel that in the eyes of one of them at least he was forever dishonored, and that the other, in girlish tyranny and sentimental caprice, had once cut him out of her life. He was intolerant with himself every time there awakened in him for a moment any sympathy for her.

He spoke curtly, harshly, to drown his gentler feelings:

"Nothing is really as tragic as we make it, you know. Few situations are worthy of being classed as tragedy. What do you want me to do, mother? Don't look so distressed."

How inexplicable he was, she thought; how strange, to lose this wonderful opportunity! He was the one to offer, to suggest. He had benefited by his dead brother's generosity.

She spoke passionately: "Give Julia your hand, John, and tell her that you are ready to help her and the children."

She glanced from him to her daughter-in-law and saw Julia flush hotly.

John did not give his hand to his sister-in-law, as he was requested to do. He stood immovable, looking at the woman who might have been his wife and have made his fate, and whom he was now, by one of those inexplicable tricks of circumstance, obliged to take care of. It might have roused, in another man, a feeling of triumph to have looked upon just this situation. There was no triumph in his heart.

He saw her embarrassment and his mother's tremor. He wanted to put an end to the situation and as quickly as possible relieve the minds of both women.

"Come," he said practically. "As I said before, there are very few tragedies in life, Julia. Don't let's make one out of a question of mere money."

For the first time he stirred from his rigid position before them. He went over to the fireplace, took a cigar from his pocket, and stood before them, smoking. He did not feel himself an inquisitor. His only regret was that his mother should be troubled.

"Your husband had been speculating in sugar before he died, hadn't he?" he asked simply.

"Yes."

"And he was speculating in sugar"—Tremaine took a few puffs at his cigar—"seventeen years ago, when I left Virginia. He was fond of Wall Street, even then."

"Julia, I didn't know that David speculated!" Mrs. Tremaine exclaimed to her daughter-in-law.

"Oh," returned the widow, "there are a great many things you did not know. What was the use of telling you?"

John continued: "There are some outstanding notes of David's, amounting to about fifty thousand dollars, if I'm not mistaken, and they fall due this year."

In spite of herself, Mrs. David Tremaine exclaimed: "Why, how do you know that?"

Tremaine shook the ashes from his cigar into the fire.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Tremaine had been occupied all morning at his desk in the superintendent's office at the mines. In this little room he passed several hours of the day, filling the position which no less a man than himself could fill; he was in reality a combination of director, financier, and "boss." Here at his desk he hammered out future combinations and held as well an arbitrary court. Little disputes were settled before him; the local magistrates were his friends and coadjutors. Many of them had made small fortunes in Blythe Moun-

tain Coal and Iron stock. Now, through his little window, he could see the encroaching forests and the delicate harmony of the winter-filled woods, where above the pines the crows flew over their rude, empty nests.

Leavitt strolled in this morning with the news that a delegation from Richmond were determined to tramp over to urge upon John the congressional nomination.

"All Virginia could not force me into politics now," said Tremaine. "It is too late."

"Nothing has ever forced you, has it, John?"

"Fate has," answered the superintendent.

"Fate," repeated the lawyer, "is a poor name for white-trash laziness. There is something in a real gentleman that stands up against fate and protests. It's nearly twelve o'clock," continued the lawyer, looking at his watch. "Won't you walk back with me? It's the prettiest day you ever saw."

"I'm lunching here, Leavitt."

Leavitt made a grimace. "On Hungarian stew or Italian macaroni?"

"On a sandwich and beer."

"I reckon I'll go, then, and keep the family in order."

"Keep my mother company," said Tremaine.

At the door, Leavitt stopped to light a fresh cigar.

John bent over his writing and said: "Why don't you marry my mother, Leavitt?"

"Suh!" exclaimed the old lawyer, crimpsoning. "How dare you, suh?"

"She will need you very much when I have gone back to South Africa. Don't be ashamed of the divine fire." John smiled. "The long devotion has kept you beautifully young, Leavitt. Love is becoming to a man like you."

Leavitt, after striding halfway across

the room, pushed the door open and went out, slamming it after him. Tremaine again absorbed himself in his work. In defiance of the stove system, he had made the builders put in a big brick chimney, and he burned great knots of cedar and pine in his room. He looked at the friendly glow of the logs; he heard the friendly voices of the fire.

He had fetched with him here some South African papers. He opened them now and began to read. The news was two months old, but fresh and interesting to him. He began to absorb himself in the Johannesburg news. The voices of the veldt, of the immense distances that had made his home for so long, now called him just as Virginia had once called, but the appeal was different.

Virginia, passionate, yearning, full of promise, full of imagination, with all the charm of his youth, had cruelly brought him back. Virginia had promised him those things that a man can receive only from his home; the things a man can find only among his own people. Virginia had promised to put the crowning touch on his life; he had thought to find love here. Now it seemed that her appeal had been false and untrue—a will-o'-the-wisp dancing in the marshes.

He turned his newspaper pages and saw familiar names of men whom he had known as insignificant and who had during his absence become rich and successful. He had declined all positions of trust offered to him; but now the veldt promised him those things that a man looks to when certain hopes are dead, when certain ways have been forever leveled, when certain summits have been definitely reached, and when one knows the entire horizon from line to line. Africa promised him consolation, repose after his agitated years, the blessing of forgetfulness to be found in a place where associations are

nil, where one has not suffered sentimental horrors.

Tremaine folded up his papers. He would go at once, now that Christmas was past. He steeled his heart as it protested at this decision.

He was adding up columns when he heard young voices, and the boys, with their mother, came together up to his window.

Little Roger knocked on the pane. "Can we come in, Uncle John?"

Tremaine opened the door for them. They came in like wild Indians, with whoops and shouts, and threw themselves against their uncle like savages; their cheeks crimson, their eyes bright, their voices high with excitement, they were warranted to dispel the mood of a disillusioned man, if they had only come alone.

John sparred with them, managing them with one hand, to their delight. Julia, to whom he had merely nodded, stood quietly by the door. When John had rolled both his nephews into the corner and imprisoned them behind chairs, laughing at his victory, their mother said:

"Boys, I want you to go back to granny. Come, take your caps and run along."

They were too accustomed to obey to protest, and still continuing their "rough-house," they fairly fought themselves out of the door.

No sooner had Julia closed the door on them than she turned, and with the quality that above all others never failed to please him, said frankly, holding out her hand:

"I can never see you alone at the house, and I have come boldly down here to do so. I want to thank you for what you have done for my children."

She stood quietly, very tall and graceful in her widow's dress. There was not a note of color about her but her bright lips. Even her eyes and hair

were, as little Roger had said, in mourning, too. As if she had not fully expected him to take her outstretched hand, she put both hands in her muff, came slowly over, and stood by the table where he had been working.

"You asked me not to thank you. I know what you mean, of course. But you must understand what a weight you have lifted from my heart."

Tremaine made no response. She touched the table with her hand and looked about the shanty.

"This is where you have made another brilliant success, isn't it?" she said. "Brought plenty out of ruin. What miracles you work! How wonderful it all seems!"

He did not invite her to sit down, but she did so in his big chair. The expression of her face was grave and composed.

"Can't we be friends?" she asked simply. Before he could answer, and in order to prevent his doing so, she continued: "I seem to drive you from the house. You keep off here by yourself all the while. It's not fair. It's better for me to go North at once. I shall tell your mother that a telegram has called me back. I'll leave the boys."

Tremaine did not immediately recall the fact that her house was not habitable, that she had no money, that her suggestion was something of an empty one. It pleased him in her. But he had no intention of letting her think that her presence affected him in the slightest degree. He said coldly:

"I am always very busy. I am not accustomed to a home or to companionship. I come here from choice." And his manner almost told her that her presence in the house was a matter of complete indifference to him.

"I am glad," she said eagerly, "that I do not drive you away. I ought to realize how far back in the past everything is." Then she repeated: "Can't we be friends?"

"You don't really expect that, do you?" he asked curtly, picking up one of the papers he had been engaged in sorting.

"When you speak of *expecting*," said Mrs. Tremaine with a slight smile, "I gave up expecting things long ago."

"You will minimize your disappointments," said John practically, "and your joys will be the sharper."

She repeated in a low voice: "My joys?" And before he could reply, she bent forward, slightly animated, and said to him, taking him swiftly into her confidence: "You haven't any conception what my life has been, John."

John put an elastic band around the papers he held. "I never wondered. I don't now."

"One long, terrible disillusionment."

She was evidently stating a fact; there was no doubt about that. He put down his papers and looked at her. Her large, dark eyes were raised to his with the confidence of a child.

"If what you say is true," said Tremaine, "it is unfortunate; but will you spare me the details, Julia? And understand me when I say that they cannot possibly interest me. It is past midday, and in a few moments I shall pay two hundred men their week's wages. It would not be pleasant for you to be here with a gang of dirty Hungarians and Italians."

He saw her bite her lip, and that quick little action—an old trick of hers—brought her back to his remembrance as he had known her of old, when everything she had done had possessed for him an acute charm.

"I am rather a savage," he said, less brutally. "I had the reputation of being the rudest man in Reekie, so you needn't be surprised if I live up to it."

Julia put her muff on the table. She leaned on it and looked up at him; the tears sprang to her eyes.

"Don't I know?" she said, in a low voice. "Don't I understand it, John?"

Your heart turned to bitterness. I know what made you hard and rude. Why, I would not be surprised if you struck me! Let's be frank," she continued, "just frank. You are big and generous and wonderfully kind to others. Try not to be too—too cruel to me. I am so wretched, so utterly wretched—" The tears in her eyes brimmed over and she put her head down on her muff and shook with emotion.

"Julia," he said, less harshly, "control yourself. In a few minutes this room will be full of miners. You must go back to the house. Come!"

But he did not touch her on the shoulder or move from where he stood. After a few seconds, Mrs. Tremaine raised her head, wiped her eyes, pulled her veil down, and drew her furs about her throat. As he walked with her toward the door, she said:

"I didn't want to come to Virginia, Heaven knows! There was no excuse I could make to your mother. She would not understand. While I am here, make it as easy for me as you can, won't you, John?"

She paused at the door. From outside came the toot of Tremaine's motor, which Nolan had driven down to fetch his master. The twelve-o'clock whistle had blown, and through the window they could see the first line of miners coming along the path that led to John's shanty.

"You must let Nolan drive you home, Julia, and send the car back for me."

But she lingered. "I came down here," she said determinedly, "for a purpose; and I am not going back without it, John."

"I am afraid," said Tremaine, opening the door of the cabin, "that this time you will have to go back exactly as I send you, Julia. I am in the habit of being obeyed."

"How hard," she murmured, "life has made you!"

"Very hard, indeed."

"How hard I made you, John—my work!"

He smiled. He accomplished his brutality like an artist. "Oh, no," he said easily, "you must not blame yourself for that. There are very few women whose influence is strong enough on a man to change his temperament. Don't blame yourself. Think about other things. There is no reason why our paths should cross. Nolan," he called to the Irishman, "run Mrs. Tremaine home, will you? And come back at once for me."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Now that he had definitely made up his mind to return to South Africa, Tremaine took a certain comfort in the thought that once again he would put behind him, at such a great distance, problems and difficulties that he saw no way of solving for himself. Once again he planned to lose himself in the excitement of impersonal enterprise, and would not let himself acknowledge, as he looked forward once again to breaking in new interests and undertaking new schemes, that he could fail to find such vital interests there as would make him forget the hunger of his heart.

But it had been a different proposition before. Poor and unknown, he had had everything to gain. Now he had made his position, and the time had come for him to enjoy the fruit of his labors.

On his trips between Richmond and Riverside—for the affairs of his company took him to the city from time to time—he meditated on what he styled to himself his thoroughly unsuccessful life; thoroughly unsuccessful, because he had failed to secure for himself happiness or its possibility.

His relations with Mrs. David Tre-

maine were impersonal. She evinced the greatest delicacy in her attitude toward him, and he could not but appreciate it. Still, whenever he came into the house, it seemed to him that she was there, whether accidentally or purposely, under his eyes and at his side, and for the most part alone. During the interval of years, while she had been his brother's wife, her mind had not gone to waste. She had developed and agreeably; she was a well-informed, entertaining woman, besides being a charming one. If she used her powers to draw and allure him, she was so clever about it that he was not aware of her campaign. In spite of himself, he found her interesting, and little by little they drifted into seeking and prolonging the tête-à-têtes that at first they had both avoided; with the result that before John realized it, they had between them an entirely new basis of acquaintance. He could remember, on his drives in the motor to Richmond and back, agreeable conversations, topics of the day intelligently and pleasantly discussed with a woman of the world. He could remember glances that had been withdrawn before they had had any meaning. He could remember soft laughs and a flattering interest in everything he planned or thought of doing.

So well carried on was Julia's campaign that he was actually drawn into telling her something of his life. And once, at the close of some incident in the earlier part of his career—a period in which he had suffered, and suffered alone—he had paused to look up at her and had seen tears in her eyes and heard her murmur: "Poor boy!" Tremaine had abruptly broken off, and it had been several days before he had brought himself to speak of anything of the sort again.

Her children around her added to her charm. Their love, her good sense, and her strength of character, com-

binded to win from him a respect that he gave her grudgingly.

But above all, more dangerous than all, more important than all—she was a woman, a free woman, a charming and desirable one; and she had evidently gone back very far into her past and there found a tenderness for this man that she nursed under his very eyes.

He had hoped to leave Virginia early in January for South Africa, but before he could prepare for his journey, a complication in the affairs of the company obliged him to postpone his journey indefinitely.

He came back to Riverside one evening, wrapped in his fur coat and driving the motor himself. He felt defeated, as if he were an animal driven into a covert; and it was with a feeling of obstinate and almost dogged determination that he turned to his affairs on this special evening. Each day he received letters and pamphlets from political circles, urging him to step into the field for Virginia. He had this evening flung several into the waste-paper basket, when he was conscious that once again he was alone with his sister-in-law, his mother having gone upstairs with the boys. Julia sat in a big chair, screening her face from the firelight.

"It's too bad, John," she said. "Oh, it's a terrible, terrible shame!"

He paused in the act of destroying a pamphlet and asked sharply: "What's too bad, pray?"

"That you can't run for Congress."

So *she* was going to take up that question, too! Agitate him anew on the subject!

"I can't understand," he said disagreeably, "why my career should be of such tremendous importance."

Quite immobile, she sat there before him, looking up at him.

"I know the cloud you are under,"

she said, scarcely aloud. "I have known it for years."

He paled, stared at her, bit his lip, then gave a cruel laugh and said savagely:

"Of course you do! Just one more added to the number! David told you, did he?"

"I have known," she said, "ever since the night you ran away, and I pitied you then. Please believe me."

He turned away from her and walked across the hearthrug.

"I don't want your pity, Julia," he said over his shoulder to her shortly.

But before he had gone from her half a dozen steps, tortured as he was by events and circumstances, he understood that her pity had in it a vast deal of sweetness. Before he had turned back, Julia had risen and stood before him, holding out her hand.

For days he had been resolutely turning his thoughts away from her, as he had been keeping himself away from her in reality. Her personality was a pervading one, difficult to escape, enchanting, fascinating. She knew her charm and used it. He understood it, and realized that she never came into the room where he was without making him conscious of her presence. She was, however, the first woman who had spoken to him sympathetically of this hideous complexity, and she was all sympathy now, her eyes soft and bright. She seemed, as she stood there now, to push away the curtain between the past and the present, and to go back into the old days, leading him with her. He felt in that moment that dangerous rush of tenderness that comes only with the need of love, and the call of it, and the desire for it.

But Julia could not have known by his expression that he was anything but hostile to her. His brow was dark and his expression sad and stern.

"John," she said—and in the agreeable modulation of her voice, in its

lowered tone, there was everything of feeling, with just the shade over it that keeps feeling from becoming passion—"John, you don't know, in these years, how I have followed your lonely footsteps. They echoed in my dreams!"

She saw his face soften, and understanding that he must not come to her too suddenly, did not push her chance, but said: "I want to know everything that has happened to you all these years—the slightest little details of your struggles and of your success. You haven't even told your mother. She doesn't know your adventures. You must have had many, John. It doesn't make any difference to me what you did before you left Virginia. Instead of going away from you all these years, I've been going toward you——"

But she did not come toward him now. Instead, as she watched his face change and saw the response to her grow in his eyes, she withdrew; the hand she had extended to him dropped by her side; she turned away a little; and he, watching her intensely, saw her color fade as her emotion deepened. She caught her under lip with her teeth, and the snow white went down into the red of her lip, which was as bright as a flower. Her eyelids drooped, and there were tears under them.

His heart beat quickly. He went over to her, took her hands, as they hung by her side, and lifted them in his, both of them. As he did so, feeling the cool sweetness of her flesh, there came to him the overmastering desire to make her forget in him and to remember only with him. She was looking at him steadily, the tears bright upon her lashes.

"No, John, no!" And she tried to draw herself away. "You don't believe in me! No!"

And her withdrawal, and the sense that she was trying to escape him, whipped his desire. With an exclama-

mation unintelligible to her, which was really only a half cry to the woman that for the moment swayed him, he drew her into his arms. But before he could kiss her, Mrs. Tremaine's step fell upon the stairs outside. He set Julia free, and, turning brusquely from her, left the library by way of the dining room, the sense of her still in his arms, his eyes clouded.

He went directly to his room and stood in the open window, looking down into the valley toward the mines and Malvern.

The bedroom door was burst open by his nephews, who flung themselves against him.

"Uncle John," said Roger, "we are going to lock and barricade the door and keep you in prison until you tell us the end of the caravan story. You were just setting out for a lion hunt when you came up with poor Nolan."

CHAPTER XXXV.

It was their grandmother's wish that during their stay at Riverside the children should dine with them sometimes. On these occasions the dinner hour was advanced to half past six, but little Roger, early as the hour was, sat dreaming and almost dozing by his grandmother's side.

Julia and Mrs. Tremaine saw John this evening in a new light. He was charming. He talked of Redlands and the district, talked of politics and finance, and discussed with Julia questions of jurisprudence in New York State, a subject upon which she was well informed. A look of delight passed over his mother's face. It looked like a reconciliation. She glanced from her son to her daughter-in-law and thought: "Why, this would be a solution. If Julia knew, why would this not be the solving of the problem?"

Little Roger, scarcely raising his

drowsy lids, said: "Mother, get Uncle John to tell you about Tom Nolan."

Tremaine shook his head, but Davy, without waiting for an invitation, began:

"Why, Nolan got lost in the South African desert and was captured by some natives. Wasn't he, Uncle John?" Davy's voice assumed an irresistible brogue. "When Uncle John found him at last, he was lying unconscious behind a clump of bushes, he was; and Uncle John saw him, all covered with flies and sores. Didn't you, Uncle John?"

"Davy!" exclaimed his mother.

"Let him go on, Julia," said his grandmother.

"Yes, granny," said the boy gratefully. "Uncle John carried him back with him—didn't you, Uncle John? And nursed him back to life. Didn't you?"

"My people nursed him."

"Is that all?" asked Julia.

"No, it's a whole book," replied the boy.

"Shut it up, Davy," advised his uncle, "and put it on the shelf for the night."

"But you have not heard what Tom Nolan was," urged the boy. "He was the bravest man in Rhodesia, Uncle John says. When the natives tortured him, he never gave a squeal; he made Irish jokes as long as he could speak. 'Faith, an' they couldn't understand me 'noways,' he said—didn't he, Uncle John?—'an' Oi thought Oi moight as well jolly 'em as curse 'em.'"

Every one laughed at Davy's mimicry, but his eyes were fixed on his uncle alone for approval.

"And, granny, when they heated up the fire to roast him alive, he stood there all tied with ropes cutting into his flesh and said: 'Put on more wood, bhoys; that fire wouldn't roast a pig.' They were howling and yelling like mad things around him—weren't they,

Uncle John?—and he just sang out: 'Long live the king! Don't make such a rumpus! It's only Tom Nolan ye've got! There's better than me free, thank God!'"

There was a spirit in it, even as the child told it.

"But it seems they didn't roast him, Davy," said his mother.

"No," said the boy; "he was so brave and made such fun that they took him down and left him like I told you. And Uncle John found him there."

At that moment, as his personal history was being recounted, Nolan himself opened the door and said to his master:

"Shure, it's the long-distance from Richmond, Mr. Tremaine."

And John sprang up, glad of an excuse that would take him from the house this evening.

"I'll answer it," he said to Nolan; "and order the car. I shall have to run in."

From the door he said to them: "It's a long distance from Richmond to Rhodesia, isn't it? Good night."

The following day, in the afternoon, he started for a long tramp and climb. He determined to tire himself out physically, and if there was anything in him but the brute, the exercise would give it a chance to shake its wings. He had the habit of going to the outdoor world for consolation. It was one of his ways of overcoming his fiends to use them up in exercise. He wanted to amalgamate himself with the fragrant winter forests, to lose himself in the wilderness.

The trail, after skirting the tract of land that he had sold to the iron company, started up the hills that formed the boundary of his property—a fair blue horizon between Virginia and West Virginia. Slippery and uncompromising, the trail was nearly blind.

Rugged and stony, it wound its hilly way to a point of land known as Blythe Rock—a perch hundreds of feet above the river and a steady climb for hours. He had not made this excursion for many years, and went at it like a climber in the Alps. In his boyhood, this had been a real adventure, and it had left its memories.

It was three o'clock in the afternoon when he reached Blythe Rock. He threw himself down on the ground, panting, tired, exhilarated. His pulses were quick with the excitement and the exercise, but as he felt the cold breeze blow over him he realized the folly of lying inert, and, rising, walked to and fro, the mountain wind on his cheek. The high plateau, dominating the valley, gave him a bird's-eye view of his possessions and he stood there like a pioneer of old. He found that he had a cigarette or two, lit one, and smoked peacefully, looking down on the scene before him.

The one emotion to which he could give free play was the exhilaration of possession. Down at the mountain's foot were ranged the cabins of the mining settlement and along the river the shanties of the Italian laborers. He could see the outlines of his model farms and gardens; they all looked as small as the playthings of a child. The old homestead, too, was like a toy house. The warm red soil of Virginia folded all around. The country seemed to sleep like a hibernating animal in the gentle Southern winter. Here and there were patches of live oaks, green as in summer, while the smoke from Redlands' chimneys rose faintly like breath from living lips.

"It's all like the passing of a cloud," he said aloud. "Like snow on the desert's face."

He thought of Africa and the mark he had set on the part of the country where he had reigned like a king. There were many things there that spoke for

him, but in the fifteen years that it had taken to complete his career, what status as an individual had he attained?

Blythe Rock stood before him. In his boyhood this mass of stone had seemed a tremendous thing. Its blank face had looked down on these scenes for who could tell how many centuries? Over the Indian raids, over the coming of the husky pioneers, over the marches of Washington's armies, and of the Federal troops. And now it looked down on the regeneration of the land by John Tremaine.

He touched the rock. It was cold, ponderous, and immovable. The mammoth pines around him rose to celestial heights. There was peace in their branches and beauty in their forms. He looked down at his bare hand as it lay against the surface of the stone. His hand, that human thing, so much less immutable, was possessed of a greater power than the things by which he was surrounded. Under the skin, his veins ran blue with his vigorous blood. His skin was fine and elastic.

He had proved the power of his hand, of his arm as well, and the strength of his body, too. He was proud of it; he had trained it; he had kept his body under. He was able to say that in a great degree he had been master of the temple. He had permitted no excess or waste of its force and its vitality. Was he, here in Virginia now, to show himself unequal to the human struggle?

As a boy, he had made his bonfires here, had here dreamed of adventures in wild countries. He had dreamed of life, as well. Now his past lay back of him, insignificant as the toys of a child. He had loved his home and been proud of his achievements here; but everything seemed insignificant to him today, except the mental achievement. There was nothing in the material victories that could bring to him the joy he longed for.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

As he came around in front of the door of his office cabin, he saw to his surprise the figure of a woman standing quietly there in the dusk. At first—for he could not distinguish her clearly—he thought it might be the wife of one of the miners. Then, as he saw that it was the figure of a lady, he thought of Julia with aversion; but when he came a little nearer, he found that it was Isobel, standing quietly in the shadow, dressed in dark traveling clothes, furs wound about her neck.

She seemed a tranquil part of the tranquil evening and a most singular visualized expression of his thoughts. Back of her was the edge of the forest, and over her head the early winter stars. He was surprised beyond words to see her, but only thought, as he came up, how great his pleasure was that, for whatever reason it might be, she had come there to see him.

He said cordially, as he came up, "I am so glad to see you back. But you should not be here, you know, in this part of the property. You should never come to the mines."

He was shaking hands with her in the semidark.

"I wanted to see you," she said simply, "on a matter of some importance, and I took the chance of finding you here. I saw that the cabin was dark, however, when I came, and I was just about to go away when you appeared."

John took a key from his pocket, opened the door, and went in, striking a light as he did so. Miss Malvern followed him inside the shanty. He lit an oil lamp and put it on the table, threw down his hat and stick, and then looked at her. The mental heights he had reached that afternoon had cleared his face of its usual moody, melancholy expression. He had so determined to sacrifice everything, and so

fully made up his mind to an acceptance of his fate, that he felt he could be more himself with this young girl to whom, when he had parted from her, he had been such a brute.

Isobel's face was grave. She had changed even in this short interval of time. Her brief contact with the world had already matured her.

"No, thank you," she said, "I won't sit down. I have only a few words to say to you, and, as you say, it is not prudent for me to be down here very late, and my father will miss me. I have simply come to—"

But what Isobel had thought so simple, now that she faced it in the presence of John Tremaine, was not so easy as she had fancied.

Tremaine himself cut the ground from under her feet.

"You must let me be one of the first to congratulate you on what I hear is very good fortune."

"I came to speak to you about that."

He held her with his compelling, remarkable eyes, and as she looked at him and saw on his brow the reflection of the light that his late mental victory had shed, the girl realized how much she loved him.

"Fortune," said John quietly, "comes too late sometimes to human beings. Almost always it comes inopportunely. To the majority of people it comes before they are prepared to receive it, to those whom want and necessity have not enriched before the material wealth arrives to harm their souls. Now in the case of your father, Miss Malvern, it has come just at the right time. He will make good use of his money; he will resume his old activities; possibly go into politics. Indeed, he can do what he likes, pretty much. But above all, if it had not come, I am inclined to think that it would have gone very hard with him."

He saw the effect of his words, and he was dominating her intentionally;

but he did not realize how strong a woman the girl already was.

"You say that it would have gone very hard with my father. What do you mean by that?"

"I think that Mr. Malvern would not have lived very long without a great change in his affairs."

He knew her adoration for her father. She did not look at him, but stood by his worktable as Julia Tremaine had stood; but what a different woman!

"It has been a very great change, indeed."

"He is, in a way, only coming into his own."

John knew what she was thinking of. He knew the state of exhilaration, of exultation, in which she had found her father. He knew that she had before her eyes the picture of a rejuvenated, happy man, with a life before him, instead of the sordid despair and the inevitable destruction that come with poverty.

He was particularly struck this evening with the musical sweetness of her voice as she spoke with control and dignity.

"I came to tell you that I should return to the North to take up my position again; that I should continue to support myself. I had thought of trying to support my father——"

Tremaine smiled. He wanted her to look at him. He could control her better that way. She did lift her eyes, and he instantly held them.

"That," he said, "would be an intensely foolish and quixotic thing to do."

"I am not possessed of an income," said Miss Malvern.

"Your father is, however; of a very comfortable one."

She threw back her head and—for she had been very pale—the color rushed flaming into her cheeks, as she said to him frankly the words that his mother had used under such different

circumstances: "Why did you do it? Why did you do it?"

He wanted to lie to her. He believed that it was the only reasonable course of action, and he believed, too, that it would be easy. But there was something in him that absolutely forbade him to treat her with anything like untruth. She seemed a Heaven-touching peak that called only to the highest things in him.

"It has evidently come to your mind that the mining deal which your father has made was facilitated by me."

"Oh," she exclaimed, in a voice that shook now with real passion, "you could not make me believe anything *but the truth*, even if you wanted to."

He smiled.

"Fortune has come to us. My father is himself again, clear-minded and clever."

"Naturally," interrupted John. "He is taking his own place." Before she could speak again, he went on with insistence and power: "The facts you cannot possibly know." He waited. "Do you know them?" he asked directly.

She shook her head.

"It is not necessary that you should. Have you the right to deprive your father of the enjoyment of the last years of his life?"

There was a silence. He saw her waver. Then she exclaimed:

"Why you weave a net around me! You have made me an absolute prisoner!"

"That's not true. I can't see, in a way, that you have anything to do with it."

"Why," she exclaimed passionately, "he would rather break stones in the quarry than be indebted to you!"

"Remember," said Tremaine, with something of his old roughness, "that you have purely supposititious reasons for what you say and think. I neither deny nor affirm. You must regard it

as you see fit. But if you should tell your father your suspicions, he would not believe you. Not only that, but I should refute them. Moreover, to take away from your father now that which has reënstated him and made him a happier man than he had ever dreamed of being might cause his death, at his age. Don't you know it?"

"Oh!" she exclaimed, turning away from him and going toward the door. "What a singular man—what a strange man you are!"

"Possibly," said Tremaine.

"I'll never want to touch a penny of the money," she said coldly. "If I could do so, I would work my fingers to the bone rather than use it. Perhaps I shall find some way out of it. To-night I am bewildered."

"Let me say to you," he continued, his hand on the latch of the door, "that I owe a tremendous debt to Mr. Malvern. Years ago, when I was in trouble, he said a few words to me whose importance was incalculable in my life. I always promised myself to make good some day."

There was a slight clearing of her troubled face.

"Was that your motive?" she asked quickly. "To pay back a debt?"

He smiled. "You are taking it for granted that I am a factor in this transaction. I make no such acknowledgment."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

He had fitted up in one wing of the house a little study, in which he sometimes locked himself away from the boys. In the big, rambling dwelling, it was not easy to secure seclusion. Mammy's kitchen gave under his window, and he could hear her singing and crooning; but the sweet old songs did not disturb him. He could hear Nolan, too, discoursing to mammy of affairs in the East.

Even the fact that "Uncle John" was working could not keep his nephews from their stormy games in the corridor. But on this afternoon, the whole place seemed deserted, and for a long time he had sat tranquilly smoking and writing before his table. The window in front of him opened upon a little gallery, in the summer covered by a yellow rose vine. He looked down over the red soil of the meadows to the fences of the lower pastures and to the hill beyond which lay Malvern.

A step sounded in the gallery, and Julia Tremaine turned the handle of the long window and came in, shutting the door behind her.

"John," she said. "I want to talk to you. I knew you were alone here, and I can do so now."

In his meeting with Isobel in the cabin at the mines, he had felt more than ever the completeness of his renunciation. His life seemed made up of it—the laying down and giving up of everything that man holds dear. He had been this afternoon, here in his study, more intensely pervaded by his soul loneliness than ever before. He had been thinking to himself:

"Will anything in the world ever chase this desolation out of my spirit? Am I condemned to a life of everlasting solitude?"

In human flesh—and beautiful flesh, at that—breathing the charm of life, Julia stood by his side, bringing him an answer to the question he had put in acute suffering.

She was a very different woman in every way from the girl he was forced to renounce, but he believed, as he looked at her standing beside him now, that for a time at least Julia would be able to make him forget everything else in her.

She sat down by his table, leaning both arms upon it and bending over them, her face lifted to his.

"John," she said, "I've thought of nothing but you——" And he knew that she was thinking of the moment when she had been in his arms. But as she had then drawn near and yet kept him away, now she did not even brush the emotional problem. If she was thinking of his caress, she was not ready, by her words, to let him know it now.

"I can't tell you how ambitious I am for you. I want to see you fill the place in Virginia you were meant to fill. Don't be quixotic now; don't sacrifice yourself any further. Run for Congress! Do—do!"

She stopped, looking at him fully, clearly, and her eyes were not fathomable.

He was looking at the oval of her cheek, into which the color had beaten warmly. He was looking at the deep indentations of her mouth, at her dark hair, which made her neck and ear so dazzling white by contrast. Down in the old pasture, when she had been a girl, he had held her face between his hands in the moonlight and kissed her, trembling.

"My interests," he said, "have suddenly become very precious to you, Julia."

"Not suddenly, John."

He laughed—broke the spell abruptly, turning his eyes away from her.

"Do you remember," she asked in a low tone, "the day we parted—down there in the back pasture, by the old fence. You had been dreadfully jealous at the ball in Richmond. You surprised David and me, and you thought he had kissed me. You were like a madman, John; nothing would make you believe me. It is true that when David came back from college, he charmed me, as he charmed everybody. Look at your mother's worship. It is true I was a fool, and that I flirted with

him, and that I let him think I cared. It was all true. But that he ever replaced you in my heart, or took from me what I gave you, John—never, never!"

She raised her eyes to him with her last words.

"You were cruel that day by the pasture bars, John. You listened to nothing I had to say. You maddened me. You made me angry and obstinate. You accused me of every disloyalty, and I was foolish and vain. I wanted to make you suffer and let you think what you liked. After you had gone——" She said no more.

In the silence that fell between them, his eyes came slowly back to her, and he saw her sitting there almost meekly, having said, in a way, all she could—having made a warm and honorable *amende*.

Affected as he was by her personality while she talked, he nevertheless heard her excuses, her explanations; and simple and direct as he was himself, he could not at this moment disbelieve her. Because, under her magnetic influence, he wanted it all to be true, he believed her.

She unfolded her arms, which had been linked together, and, picking up a pencil, began lightly to draw a line or two on the paper before her. Her expression changed. She withdrew into herself and away from him. He began to resent it.

"Julia," he said, leaning forward to her.

But she got up from the table quickly. "I must go. The children are waiting for me. I must go."

A moment earlier he would not have let her escape him; but he did now, just rising from his chair and standing by his table, looking at her with mingled emotions as she quickly left the room, shutting the door softly behind her.

The Brand of God

By William Slavens McNutt

THE three men crouched in the underbrush, shadowlike in the gloom of the forest world, two hundred feet below the sunlit tips of the gigantic spruce and hemlock that towered over them, peering tensely through the bushes at a rude little cedar shake hut on the edge of a marsh, some two hundred yards away. The three men held rifles in front of them, and their fingers twitched on the triggers as they watched. One of them held four hounds in leash, and one hand strayed soothingly over the dogs' heads, while his lips framed a warning, "S-s-s-h!"

"Lay low!" the tallest of the three men whispered. "He may be hidin' in there somewhere."

"I'm goin' in," another whispered back sullenly. "If you're scared to take your chances along o' me for a three-way split on the money, stay here an' watch, or beat it back anyway yuh feel like. I'm goin', an' I know Red'll go with me."

"Yuh know I will," the third man asserted. "Me an' Blakey ain't been trackin' this bird for a whole year, to hand an even split on the money to a white-livered deputy that ain't game to take a chance with us. I'll bet he ain't there, at that. Come on, Blakey."

The red-headed one crept cautiously forward toward the rear of the cedar

shake hut, and the man called Blakey followed after him.

"Don't be a pair o' damn' fools!" the tall man called to them, in an anxious, angry whisper. "I don't want none o' your dirty blood money. This fellow was raised with me. If I get a chance, I'll pot him, 'cause I'm a deputy an' the law says that's my duty; but I ain't lookin' for no reward. Not me. Come back an' wait. He may be hidin' in there, an', if he is, yuh ain't got the chance of a snowball in hell. Come back!"

The man in the rear answered him with a muttered curse, and, holding the dogs in leash, crept on after his partner. The tall man who stayed behind worked his way through the brush to the bole of a tall spruce tree and stood cautiously erect. He stood with the bole of the tree between him and the cabin, and, raising his rifle, sighted along the barrel, swinging the muzzle slowly always just a little in front of his companions, who were approaching the rear of the shack. There were no doors to the little hut, only rough openings in front and rear. When the two creeping men had reached a point where they could look through the rough little edifice, one of them laughed, and they both stood erect.

The voice of the man called "Red" came to the ears of the one who had

stayed behind: "Go ahead on up. He ain't around. He's gone, like he always is."

The features of the man behind the tree writhed in an agony of terror. "The fools!" he whispered hoarsely. "Oh, the fools!"

The two men moved up to the little shack, peeked in, skirted it, and started toward the shore of the marsh in front where a little, artificial dam had caught their attention. As they walked away from the shack, passing by a giant windfall from the middle of which a tall spruce grew, Red turned his head and called tauntingly to the man who had stayed behind: "Come on, yuh chicken-hearted mutt! He ain't—"

A dagger of flame flashing over the top of the windfall at his side, to the accompanying roar of a rifle, cut him short. A gun barrel protruded over the rotten, moss-grown log, and nestled along its stock was a bearded, matted, horrible face. Red staggered as the first shot ripped a hole through his chest, lifted his rifle convulsively, and sank, quivering, among the wet leaves and small brush, as the second bullet cleft his heart. The two shots came almost as one; the third shattered Blakey's left hand as he raised his rifle; and the fourth made him a fellow of his dead partner. The horrible head of the Thing back of the windfall was raised higher, as the rifle pumped more bullets into the prone form in the leaves.

The wicked "sput" of a bullet on the windfall near the hate-masked face was the first warning the Thing had of a foe other than the two that were slain. The man who had stayed back was firing from behind the tree. He was firing and at the same time praying unconsciously through writhing lips that were splotched with the foam of terror. The Thing leveled its rifle, fired once at the flash alongside the distant tree,

and dropped from sight back of the windfall.

The tall man slid cautiously to the ground, worked himself away from the shack through the underbrush for two hundred yards on his stomach, and, rising to his calk-shod feet, fled through the dense woods, leaping great windfalls, crashing through dry brush and thick ferns that grew far above his head, falling, rolling, clawing his body erect, fighting his way blindly on, while great sobs of pure terror tore his tortured lungs.

And the man who ran so was brave. As a deputy sheriff he had faced death unflinchingly when it had belched in flame-spod lead from the throats of hostile guns in the hands of desperate men. The Thing he fled from was not death. He fled literally from a Thing; a Thing that generated terror as might a horrible ghost. He fled from an animal that walked on two legs and carried a gun. He fled from a corpse that lived; the body of a man from which the man had long since gone.

Far behind him the three hounds sniffed at the dead bodies in the leaves and howled a mournful dirge. After an hour, the Thing arose from behind the windfall and vanished, a ragged shadow in the coming gloom, into the deep woods. The hounds shrank together in fear and whined as it went; then took up again their lonely vigil over the dead.

Timber cruisers and lone hunters who had caught terrified glimpses of Tom Morgan, since the day he had taken to the wilderness as an outlaw with a price upon his head, reported that The Brand was gone from him. He was an animal. His gaunt, great body was wrapped about by the skins of other animals that he had conquered. All traces of the human—that God-given something that marks mankind as the one link binding animal flesh and eter-

nal spirit—had disappeared from Tom Morgan, the wild man of the Olympics. His black beard was a tangled scrub that added to the paralyzing ferocity of his large-featured face. His deep-set dark eyes burned with a terrifying fire of insanity under the thick-thatched brows. All agreed that he was an insane beast, whose slaughter the safety of civilized society demanded. The Brand was gone, and he was a wild animal of prey, far more dreadful than any cougar or bear, for that he carried that deadly weapon of mankind, a modern, high-power rifle, and retained in his beastly degeneracy expert knowledge of its use.

The Thing that had been Tom Morgan picked the head from a flying duck, shooting from the hip without aim, with the same unconcerned ease and certainty with which you reach to press an elevator button with your thumb. He had had a gun butt at his shoulder since his early childhood, and he no more missed the thing at which he shot than an expert stenographer misses the keys of her machine with the tips of her trained fingers. Ten expert woodsmen, all seeking his life for the price that was on it, had fallen victims to his uncanny genius with a rifle during the three years of his outlawry, and had been found stripped of their guns and ammunition and buried in shallow graves in the deep woods.

For three years, the Thing that had been Tom Morgan, from which the Brand of God had faded, ruled supreme, the beast monarch of a wilderness kingdom that covered an area one hundred miles square, dotted sparsely with the faint stamp of civilization in the design of a trapper's rude cedar shake hut. The kingdom was bounded on the north by the Straits of San Juan de Fuca, that ten-mile-wide front walk of the Pacific Ocean that leads from the sheltered waters of Puget Sound out ninety miles to the open sea; on the

west by the rough and uninhabited shore line of the Pacific Ocean; on the east by the waters of Puget Sound; and on the south by a timid, tattered fringe of bucolic civilization that encroaches on the virgin wild with ragged and hesitant threads of road and trail straggling inward from the bolder mesh of towns along the railway line.

The kingdom is savagely deformed by a rupture of mountains running east and west parallel to the straits, which form one of the most rugged, chaotic, and inaccessible ranges on the North American continent. It is a range without sequence of ridges, tumbled in a gigantic disorder. So utter and grand is the wild chaos of eternally snow-crowned, ragged rock peaks as to suggest the thought of the wanton hand of a drunken fiend maliciously at play with the plastic muck of a world in birth.

It is a kingdom to a great extent inaccessible and unexplored. It is a virgin world lying naked under the very eyes of a lustful civilization; but the passion for the conquest of that in nature which dares and forbids the mastership of man cools with the consideration of the inaccessibility of this wild strip of eternity's yesterday; the inaccessibility that has left in civilization's gardened dooryard an ineradicable fragment of the world of a thousand years ago. This bit of utter wilderness—the mountain peaks of which show so plainly from the upper windows of Seattle's office buildings—is as incongruous in its adjacency to the bustling modern city as a dinosaur passing an automobile on an asphalt street, or a pterodactyl in winged pursuit of an aeroplane against the New York sky line.

And within this weird domain the wild beast Thing in the physical shape of a man held sway and spread terror over all the borders. It lived unsheltered through three winters, when the snow was ten feet in depth. The people of a State speculated on the secret of

its tenacious hold on life under circumstances that were death to men, again and again declared It dead, and again and again discovered—by a track in the snow, the mutilated carcass of an elk, the half-buried body of some trapper who had sought the Thing for the price that was on Its head—and found It—that It lived in spite of all, lived in defiance of all that we regard as the laws of life and death. It was an animal, a recreation of what men were before they were men; and, as such, was immune to the perils of the wilderness that are death to the men of to-day.

II.

The man who had stayed behind the tree and fled in such panic after the shooting, stood, panting and disheveled, before a telephone in the rude office of a logging camp sixteen miles from the scene of the tragedy. He had made the distance in four hours, over the mountains and the forest where no trails were.

"I got the sheriff," he gasped out to the crowd of loggers about him as he hung up the phone. "He's makin' up a posse, an' he'll be here in the mornin'. I caught him at Bolton. His wife an' her brother is campin' up on Little Swail, an' he was on his way up there when I got him. He'll be here in the mornin'. I—God! Gimme another drink! I'll see that face to my dyin' day. All matted over with hair, an' the eyes—God!"

"D'y'e think the boys are dead?" one of the men asked.

"They must be. I couldn't tell whether I hit him or not. He either fell or ducked while I was shootin'. Yuh ought to seen him—B-r-r-r-r-r! He was a awful sight! I was brought up with him, too. I knew him when he—eh—when he—when he was all right. An' Sheriff Stanton—Ain't that the hell? It was account o' the

sheriff's wife he shot that first guy. Yeh! She was Milly Price then, an' Morgan was dead stuck on her. This lumberman from Portland—Heisler—he come to town an' tried to get fresh with Milly, an' Morgan shot him. He was a millionaire an' sported around there in an automobile an' all that, an' I reckon he kind o' turned Milly's head for a little.

"An' now she's hooked up with the sheriff, an' Morgan—God! An' now he's got Blakey! I warned 'em not to go in, but they been huntin' for him for a year for the price that was on him, an' they had to go. They would have it. We got the tip three days ago, from a timber cruiser, that he was in there, an' they wouldn't wait for no posse. They wanted the money that was on him. An' now they're—Gimme another shot o' that."

While the deputy slept and, screaming, screamed of the horrible Thing that he had seen, the news that Morgan was yet alive and had added two more victims to his string was humming on the press wires over the country. In the early dawn arrived at the camp the sheriff, a stocky, bull-jawed, quiet fellow, followed by an armed posse of seventy-five men.

"We've got to get him this time, no matter what it costs," the sheriff said, when he had heard his deputy's tale. "This makes ten men to his credit, if the boys are dead, an' he's got to be landed. It's kind o' tough on me, right at this time, but my wife's brother—he's in at the camp, an' he'll bring her out an' take care o' her, I reckon."

He turned to the foreman of the logging camp and beckoned him aside. "You look to it that nobody goes across country to my camp to tell the wife that I'm huntin' Morgan," he said. "She's—I reckon we're due for another member o' the family soon, an'—You know. If this chase lasts a good, long while, I may not be out o'

the woods before—it happens. I was on my way to get her an' bring her out when I got the word last night."

It was an ominous crowd that stood bareheaded about the dead bodies of the two men by the little cedar shake hut in the woods ten hours later. The trip that the deputy had made in four hours had taken them nearly the span of a day.

"Both dead when they dropped," the sheriff judged solemnly, as he stroked the backs of the whimpering dogs that had stood guard over the dead throughout the long night and day. "It's up to us, boys. We've got to get him, if we have to hunt the rest o' the year."

"We're with yuh," the crowd muttered. "We'll get him."

"It'll be a wide hunt, boys," the sheriff prophesied. "Pair off in twos an' threes, an' keep a-huntin' till somebody gets him. That's all the advice I can give yuh. Hit for the loggin' camp when yuh need grub or yuh get any news. That's all. Scatter!"

And the dread hunt began. It lasted for three long weeks. Three times during that period men staggered from the forest into the logging camp lugging wounded partners on their shoulders. None of them had seen the beast, but bullets had ripped from the brush and done their work. The hunters were spread over an area twenty-five miles square, their nerves strained to the snapping point, gaunt and wild looking from exposure, fatigue, and tension. Occasionally a pair appeared out of the forest, secured a new supply of grub, and, cursing the Thing they sought, dived back into the brush again.

It was on the twentieth day of the hunt that a man rushed into the logging camp with the first news of having seen the outlaw, and the man was the sheriff's brother-in-law.

"I seen him up in Little Swail yesterday," he told the crowd at the camp. "Up there on the crick, not a mile from

where we was campin' this summer. I didn't have nothin' on me but a six-gun, so I hustled for here. Does anybody know where Stan is?"

"He's comin' in for grub," was volunteered. "First time he's been in since he left here. He's borrowed grub from others, an' stuck with the game; but I met him not two hours gone, over on the old Martin Trail, headed this way."

"I seen him," Price shouted out exultingly, as the ragged sheriff appeared, toiling up the trail a half hour later. "Over there by where we was camped. Stan, he—"

"How's Milly?" The sheriff's bearded lips framed the question with seeming difficulty, and he wet them with the tip of his tongue as he asked it.

"All right, I guess," Price answered blankly. "I dunno. I ain't seen her. I come in on the hunt the Saturday after it started, an' I been—— What's the matter?"

The blood drained out of the sheriff's face and he rocked on his heels convulsively, like a man struck with lead.

"You brought her out!" It was an assertion rather than a question.

Price stared. "I—— No. Why, I thought—— My God! Didn't she come with you?"

The sheriff wiped a mask of sweat from his forehead shakily. "No," he said numbly. "I was on my way back to get her when I heard o' this thing. You were in there with her. You brought her out."

Suddenly the blood flooded into his worn face in a great, ugly surge that flushed his eyes and dripped from his nostrils down over his scrub of a beard in little crimson drops. He sprang at his brother-in-law and, seizing him by the throat, jammed him to his knees on the trail.

"You brought her out!" he screamed at him, as if physically to force the fact he wished. "You did, damn you! You did!"

A dozen men forced him, struggling and screaming, away from the man he choked, and Price rose, gibbering with fear and remorse.

"I thought you'd come in an' get her," he stammered. "We were lookin' for you in on Wednesday, an' Tuesday I went over the summit huntin' with Jack Quinlan. She said you were comin' the next day. I thought you'd get her. I met McCabe an' Johnson over on the trail the other side of the bridge that Saturday, an' they told me about Morgan, so I been huntin' him since. Somebody must o' got her. Mebbe somebody— Telephone to town an'—"

But the sheriff was already leaping away up the trail for the office. He faced the crowd that followed him as he emerged from the shack, and there was no need for any one of them to ask the answer to his call.

"Nobody's heard o' her," he said dully. "Up there alone in that camp, an'— Oh, God A'mighty! An' Morgan— Come on, boys. It's eighteen miles cross country, an' we're goin' to make tracks. I'm tellin' ye, Price, that if I'm too late, I'm goin' to kill yuh. It may be my fault an' it may be yours, but if it's too late, I'll see to it we both pass out along o' her. Let's move."

Some day the story of the trip that followed will be a legend. The men who took it, twenty in all, rank with woodsmen as the man who played with Booth stands among theatrical folk. Across a country that fairly leans over backward, so steep are the hills, and through a dense forest where no trails have ever been cut, the cavalcade went, led by the fairly demoniacal sheriff.

Stanton was primarily a man of the woods and strong as are all such; but fear for the safety of a loved one lent a strength to his tough body that was uncanny. He plunged into the seemingly impenetrable wall of the forest as

a desperate half back lunges into the formation of the opposing team when the gain of a few yards spells the difference between glorious victory and ignominious defeat. He fought his way through the maddening impediment of the tough underbrush with a maniacal intensity of effort that awed the panting crowd that followed him. He vaulted great, moss-grown windfalls masked with ferns and weeds that grew head high. He clawed his way up cliffs and steep hillsides that present a complex problem to the professional mountaineer, and one to be studied with care before a cautious ascent is attempted, but he went up like a monkey scrambling up a trellis. He raced down slopes that were scarcely less than perpendicular, with a reckless disregard for his life and safety that made the men who followed think vaguely of biblical stories of miracles when they found that he still lived. And the men followed him. They followed him in many places almost against their wills, driven on by the lash of his voice.

As he forced his mad way through the primeval forest and over the great rock pinnacles that lay between him and certainty of the safety or death of the woman he loved and the creature of their love that he knew must have come into being, he shouted back derisive curses, rude pleadings, that were more powerful than the polished utterances of the greatest of emotional actors in strong scenes, great, gasping pleas for the men to help him in his need.

And help they did. Some there were, indeed, for whom thefeat was absolutely impossible, and these dropped in their tracks and lay for hours where they had fallen, in the deep, fern-cushioned gloom of the forests, where the tops of the trees wove back and forth in the clear sunlight two hundred feet above them, or on rocky slopes, where a misstep meant a death drop of hundreds of feet. The men

who started on that trip and fell by the way were not all accounted for for two weeks. Many of them came back on rude stretchers, carried by searchers sent out for them.

But seven stuck. They were men like the sheriff. Men with barrel bodies, lean, thewed legs, and grim faces that could set with a determination that suggested the strength and solidity of the rock mountains among which they had their being. And at length they came to the roaring waters of the Little Swail, some two miles below where the sheriff and his wife had camped in the summer, and a mile from where Price had reported having seen the mad outlaw, Morgan.

From there on, they proceeded with greater caution, working their way up the stream, with their rifles held in readiness, their eyes peering intently ahead, searching the reaches of the stream as they rounded each curve, and ferreting the forest gloom on either side. The woolen shirts of three of the men were torn completely across their backs. Another stalked naked above the waist, with the exception of the roll collar of his soft shirt and a flaming red necktie that had escaped the thorny clutch of the brambles and the sharp points of rock on the cliffside. They panted heavily as they struggled up the stream, and no man had a word for his partner. They talked, it is true, in almost unintelligible murmurs, but they talked to themselves; muttering vows of horrible vengeance on the mad Thing that had terrorized the community for years, if it should be proven that It had committed, "among others of Its atrocities, a crime against the woman for love of whom It had become an outlaw.

Treading around an abrupt bend in the creek bed, the sheriff, who was in the lead, stopped suddenly, a warning hand upheld.

"Smoke," he whispered back to his

tense followers after a moment. "I smell wood smoke. Easy!"

Slowly, with infinite care, they crept on. A little stretch of pebbly beach, fifty yards long and ten wide, intervening between the roaring water of the mountain stream and the green, irregular wall of the forest, came into view. Back of a great cedar windfall that stretched from the tangle of brush and forest out and onto the beach, a thin wisp of smoke ascended.

As the strained men stood knee-deep in the rushing water, watching, a head appeared from behind the log near which the thin, wavering streamer of smoke arose. It was a horrible head; the more so for its faint resemblance to a human being. It was the head of Tom Morgan that was, and eight rifles roared as one as it came into view.

The men dived for the shelter of the forest along the banks even as they fired. The head disappeared, and for a moment no sound was distinguishable save the gurgle of the water on its way to the sea and the echoes of the gunshots from the cliffs. Then came an astonishing sound that galvanized the entire posse into action and sent the sheriff leaping toward the log from behind which the head of the outlaw had appeared, utterly unmindful of the danger that the Thing might yet be alive and playing "possum," to lure his pursuers on. It was a thin, high wail; the unmistakable plaintive, questioning wail of a frightened baby.

The posse followed as the sheriff raced toward the dread log from behind which each one of them momentarily expected a veritable rain of lead, and the first of the men was not more than twenty yards behind the leader as he vaulted over the moss-grown top of the windfall.

A great cry of sheer joy from the sheriff and an unintelligible answer in the weak voice of a spent woman apprised the posse that danger was past.

They crowded to the windfall and stared over at the sheriff, who held his wife in his arms, half lifting her from a natural hollow under the fallen tree. With his back against the incline of the little hollow, lay the body of what had once been Tom Morgan. It was wrapped in fragments of skins and rags sewn together by the thews of animals. The face was a mass of blood, dirt, and beard. Two blue holes, from which the red fluid of life oozed out, gaped in the forehead. In the embrace of the great, hairy, dead arms was the body of a wailing baby girl not more than a few days old. The tender little body was wrapped in a soft shawl.

"Oh, Stan," the woman cried weakly on her husband's shoulder, "you've killed him! He was good, Stan. Oh, Stan! He was so good! When you didn't come, I tried to get out by myself, and here—— He found me here, Stan, and he—— Oh, Stan, he wasn't bad. He took care of me and the baby, and I'd have died, Stan, if he hadn't—— Oh, Stan, he wasn't a beast. He wasn't mad. He was just a man, Stan; and so good! He was just a man, like you; and all he wanted was to be let alone. And he was so lonely and—— Oh, my husband!"

Dazedly the sheriff laid his wife back on her couch of boughs. With tender fingers he plucked the form of his baby daughter from the dead arms of the

outlaw, and stared into the tiny, puckered face, with streaming eyes. One of the men sopped a bandanna handkerchief in the stream and reverently sponged the bearded and bloody face of the bandit. The lips of the dead man were parted in a tender smile. On the set face, bearded and deformed as it was, there dwelt an expression of almost benign peace. It was a wild face, the face of one who had lived for years as his ancestors of thousands of years ago must have lived in the wild places of the young earth; but the face of an animal it was not. The Brand of God, the unmistakable stamp of differentiation between the animal and the human, flamed plain.

The sheriff dropped on one knee in front of the ragged body, and clasped a hand yet warm with the touch of the life that had mercifully sped.

"You was a man, Tom," the sheriff said brokenly. "You was, an' I wish I could tell yuh so! I wish you'd lived to let me tell yuh!"

Still holding the hand, he lifted his face and stared uncertainly at the blue sky above the waving fronds of the fir tops far above him. "If—if there's— anything after it all, Tom," he said haltingly, in an awed voice, "I reckon you'll hear me say, 'Thanks, old man,' an'—an' if there is, may—may God be—mighty good to yuh—Tom. Amen."





RECENTLY, with a genteel squeak, Mrs. Grundy gave up the ghost. She died of mortification morbus, superinduced by what she saw at a tango tea, which, mistakenly, she had entered, thinking it a sewing class. But previously she had been ailing. She suffered from neglect and also from exposure. After the slit skirt came in, she was never quite the same. Yet the mortification to which she finally succumbed must for years have been latent. The last time I saw her, she was crying on a lady finger, and between sobs she whinnied that things were not what they ought to be. Well, as for that, they never have been. But with her tears trickling on her cake, I could not tell her so. It would have been too sympathetic.

Then, shortly, with a squeak, my dear friend died. We shall never see her like again. For which reason, and while I may, I will try to draw her portrait.

MRS. GRUNDY'S EARLY YEARS.

Mrs. Grundy—née Retroussé—was born in Bloomsbury on the very day that Byron died. Bloomsbury, as you know, used to be the citadel of middle-class respectability, and Byron, as you may remember, was the author of a thousand poems and a hundred crimes. Or was it a thousand crimes and a hundred poems? Well, it is small matter now, but they were all very shocking,

and shocking is a word that Bloomsbury invented to describe the poems, unless it were the crimes. Yet, though the crimes were exaggerated, as all crimes should be and the poems are now handsomely bound and never read, the word survived.

Little Ettie—née Retroussé—was fed on it by her mother, who was then a widow and who wore a daguerreotype of the dear departed on her breast. She was afraid of burglars and regarded the daguerreotype as a protection against them, which undoubtedly it must have been. Otherwise, she was a pattern of that beautiful propriety which in those days only the ultra-conservatism of Bloomsbury preserved.

Now, if I dwell thus lovingly on what may seem negligible details, it is that I may provide some suggestion of the atmosphere of little Ettie's home, where she grew—not in beauty, for she was not pretty; she was better, she was good—but in years, and where the dear child occupied herself now in knitting mitts and antimaccasars, now in painting in water color—very chaste her taste always was—until, to be flowery about this flower, she budded into womanhood and a great event occurred.

THE VILLAIN THAT GRUNDY WAS.

At a polka party—for in those days they had parties at which they polkaed, but did not waltz; the waltz, though

German, was regarded as Byronic and improper—at an innocent little frisk of this kind, Ettie met Mr. Grundy, a most respectable young undertaker, who took everything, even serious matters, gravely, as perhaps is only right, and who subsequently, after a polite courtship, won the dear girl's shy consent to be his bride.

But see how deceptive men can be. Mr. Grundy, though an undertaker and apparently the ideal of Bloomsbury respectability, was a villain. It makes my ink blush to tell of the manner in which he treated poor Ettie. On one occasion he swore and struck her. That she might have forgiven, particularly as she had struck him first. But on another occasion she discovered him kissing the housemaid, a bold young person who fainted out of sheer bravado. With great dignity, Ettie reviled them both. It was the turning point in her wonderful career.

In the lives of all great teachers there have been moments when, suddenly, they saw the light. So it was then with her. For it was in these tragic and yet inspirational circumstances that Mrs. Grundy conceived the idea of preaching a gospel that later nimbused her false, but austere, front with a halo of entire gentility, and made her, what she became, the first of the militants, the Jeanne d'Arc of deportment, the Boadicea of propriety.

THE BIRTH OF ETIQUETTE.

Her mother's influence, the daguerreotype of her papa, the Bloomsbury atmosphere, the mitts, the water colors, the polka parties, the horrors of her life with that villain—these things, and others, too, must have been contributory. Less actually than potentially they represented what decorum is, and it was decorum that she prepared to preach. She had seen the light, and presently, in the form of a treatise, she

radiated it throughout Anglo-Saxony. But nowhere else. Though it crossed the ocean, it never crossed the Channel. With it she succeeded in making England the most proper country in Europe, and America the properest in the world. For we are not laggards. In all things we must be ahead of everybody. Uplifted by Mrs. Grundy, we got there then.

Meanwhile, there was the treatise. Originally she had intended to call it simply and severely, "Ettie's Pet." But through one of those inspirations which are the consecration of genius, that severe and simple title she revised into the simpler and severer one of *Etiquette*. With but a stroke of the pen she coined a word and founded a creed of which this treatise was the breviary. Thereafter, in any of the many delicate questions of propriety, the pious-minded would ask: "Is it *Etiquette*?" Or, at any infringement, they would exclaim: "What would Mrs. Grundy say?"

THE ASSEMBLY OF SINNERS.

Previously no one had asked, no one had cared. The memoirs of the pre-Victorian period echo still with shouts and laughter, with loud, loose talk, with toasts bawled over brimming cups, with the noise of feasting, of gaming, and of pleasure. The pages turn to the sound of fiddles. From them arises the din of an immense Sir Roger de Coverley, in which the dancers go up and down, interchanging hearts and then all hands round together.

Except for Bloomsbury, London then was peopled with macaronis and rouged women, with wits and prodigals, with dare-devils and fatted calves. Life generally was one of low scandals in high places; of great fortunes thrown in the gutter; of leisurely suppers and sudden elopements—runaways that had in their favor the poetry of the post chaise, pistol shots through the windows, and the

dignity of danger; a life mad and merry, which was very faithfully followed in colonial New York, where men wooed and women were won as readily as they were handed in to supper, the men making up to the women for the same reason that they wore ruffles—because it was the fashion, because otherwise they would have been thought provincial, Puritans, for that matter. Propriety then was a Bloomsbury oddity, infidelity a polite occupation, and modesty a question of pins.

THE QUESTION OF PINS.

Then, not suddenly—for no revolution is ever abrupt—but gradually, through royal influence, those pins were produced. Stuck into an assembly of sinners, they so pricked that they created a congregation of saints, or at least a colorable imitation that forgathered in the edifice of the Victorian reign. The edifice was eminently genteel, and in the center Mrs. Grundy sat. So closely were she and the queen associated that one might almost say that they were inseparable—though without, of course, being what you would call fast friends or even boon companions. Yet in the dark it might have been difficult to tell them apart. But the pins were very visible, the proprieties were, too, and they persisted until another lady rode them down.

THE HORNS OF THE DUENNA.

Meanwhile, wherever young men and young women met, it was on what somebody wickedly described as the horns of the duenna. A girl could not turn around alone, or, if she did, a man could not turn with her. Anything of the kind was shocking, and what would Mrs. Grundy say? But presently Mrs. Grundy could not say anything. She was too dumfounded. It was then that the mortification, of which she ultimately died, set in. For the Queen of

Denmark got on a wheel one day and changed the face of the earth.

It was at the lady's summer court on the Baltic, through the wide leisures of which the selectest princesses and the least exclusive princes lounged, that the deed was done. The young royals followed suit. Photographed, bike in hand, their pictures emerged in shop windows. At sight of them London went mad and New York went madder. So runs the world away.

The queen, meanwhile, had put her wheel aside. Imitation is flattery's most odious form. None the less, while the mania lasted, girls and men went careering over highways and byways, where a chaperon was too fat to follow and Mrs. Grundy lost to view.

WHAT DENMARK DID.

The old lady was after them. Though disheveled, she was still on her feet. But her feet could not take her every which way. Moreover, when the wheel was abandoned, in its place the motor came. Incidentally, there were sports; there was the theater with supper to follow; for, after all, it is only reasonable to suppose that young people who have run about together will come to no harm sitting still. On the contrary. But, even otherwise, at athletics, however free, and at after courses, however informal, Mrs. Grundy's protests were unheeded. No one asked what she would say. What is more reprehensible, no one cared. Routed by the bike, the Victorian age was passing.

Dumbly, in her shaky bones, the poor thing may have felt that that passing was her own. Yet for her comfort there were the bookstalls, the ballroom, and the stage. Over these the early proprieties brooded still. What came over the floats was as decorous as what went into print. In the ballroom, though the polka had gone, age had rendered the waltz respectable. More-

over, though girls rode, they did so with less grace, perhaps, but with the same modesty that had characterized their grandmammmas.

WHAT ARGENTINA COMPLETED.

Then, presto! One prop after another fell. The entire Victorian edifice crashed. Out from under rode girls astride. Playwrights took to sex problems and box offices to the receipts. Novelists that had padded their wares with scenery and platitudes filled them with passion and bad grammar. Yet to these things—all of them, even to girls astride—Mrs. Grundy might have politely affected to be unaware, had it not been that what Denmark began Argentina completed. It was the tango that finished the old lady.

The tango is a hugging match set to ragtime. To-day, so general has it become that the surviving proprieties of two worlds, and even of three, could not now turn the lights out on the huggers.

It was at the realization of this that Mrs. Grundy wept on her sponge cake. She saw that to the pomps and banalities which she had preached, the world had kissed its hand. She saw that her etiquette was out of date, and her gospel not derided, but forgotten.

Then it was that, with a genteel squeak, she gave up the ghost. Were it not for me, there would be no one now to mourn her. No more shall I hear her sainted name. My cherished friend is dead.

Sic transit gloria Grundy.

(Bloomsbury papers please copy.)



ELIXIR VITÆ

SO much must I forego that once did make
A keen and racing music in my blood;
No more at founts of passion may I slake
The spirit's thirst, nor all fair things for food
With appetites of youthful lust devour;
Nor speed to fiery ends, nor soar in flame;
Nor crowd all gain and loss into an hour;
Nor shake a universe to build a name.

Age lays its muting fingers on the strings.
Yet in the silence something inward sings,
And something sees with strangely wakened eyes.
Time, like a chemist, from the past distils
An essence by whose might the spirit flies
Swift as a shooting star along the hills.

RICHARD LE GALLIENNE.

EARTHQUAKE WEATHER



By
Neith Boyce

THE breakfast table was laid under a live-oak tree at the side of the house; for already, at half past eight in the morning, it was stiflingly hot inside the small frame cottage. It was not much cooler outside. The haze of September, after a rainless summer, hung over the dry plain and the brown foothills. On this morning it was thicker than usual, and more still. There was no motion in the air. The sky looked burned; the towering mountains on the horizon were murky with the smoke of forest fires. The earth was like ashes and cinders, refuse of the devouring sun.

At the table under the oak tree a woman sat making coffee. She was young and graceful, and her white dress and hat and pale-green sash had an air of the world. She was a little too pale and thin now, and her eyes were tired. But those eyes were charming, nevertheless, and her face was full of spirit and energy. When the coffee was made, she sat waiting, looking out vaguely across the plain, yellow with dried grasses, crossed here and there by dry watercourses or by roads that seemed to lead nowhere.

She had made the table as attractive as possible; it had white linen, bright, old silver, a bowl of pink roses from the vine that grew over the cottage.

A Chinese servant in loose white garments and flapping shoes brought out a dish under a silver cover. The young woman motioned him back impatiently.

"Not ready yet. Keep it hot," she said.

But at this moment her husband appeared at the door of the cottage and came slowly and languidly to take his seat opposite her. The silver-covered dish was placed before him, after he had refused the fruit that the Chinaman awkwardly offered him. Except a polite "Good morning," no words were uttered by the man or the woman for some ten minutes; during which he made an uninterested inspection of the table, declined eggs, and finally, with a resigned air, took a piece of toast.

"I'm afraid it's burned, as usual," said his wife, with a slight frown. "Wong is really too bad."

"Oh——" he murmured vaguely.

He was slender, good looking, immaculately dressed, with an air of delicate freshness from the bath, an air of extreme physical fastidiousness. He looked, too, rather like an invalid. He was pale, his eyes were heavy, and his face, keen and clear in outline, seemed now like an empty shell, drained of life and vigor.

"You didn't sleep well?" said the young woman, carefully pouring the coffee.

"No."

He made an impatient, irritable gesture, brushing away the flies that swarmed about his plate.

"Why do you try to set meals out here, Edith?" he asked wearily. "How can one eat, with these beasts all over one?"

"It was so hot indoors. I thought we might be able to breathe here," she said, with an air of patience.

"Hot! It's stifling! We must get away from here to-day. I never knew such infernal weather. We'll go up into the mountains."

He glanced up at the veil of smoke that dulled their bossy surfaces, showing here and there a glint of fire.

"It's much worse to-day," said Edith. "The whole range seems afire."

"Then we'll go farther away—or to the sea. Why on earth do you want to stay here, Edith?"

She looked at him and spoke with forced calmness.

"Do you think I want to stay here? You know I only want what you want—or what's best for you. You haven't wanted to go away."

"No—so long as I could sleep! At least it's quiet here. But— Oh, Lord!"

He lurched forward, his elbows on the table, and hid his face with his hands.

The woman's eyes filled with tears and she looked despair.

"Poor Jack!" she said, in a tragic voice. "What was it that kept you awake, do you know?"

"Oh, I don't know! The heat—The air seems so dead. Then the ride yesterday only tired me for nothing. My cursed brain keeps on working like a mill with nothing to grind. I shall go crazy if this keeps up."

"Jack! Don't say that sort of thing again. You might have a little mercy on me!"

He uncovered his haggard eyes and looked at her.

"Oh, you've thought of it, too! Perhaps I am, by Jove! A good thing for you—you could get rid of me, then."

She made no reply for the moment, but sat looking down at her plate and moving the pieces of silver about with unsteady fingers. The compression of her full lips showed a fierce effort at self-control. At last she said quietly:

"We needn't quarrel, need we? You know what my life is—that I haven't anything but you—your welfare—"

The words sounded to her own ear cold and forced. Deep in her heart swelled a passion of pity and of tenderness for him, but over it lay a crust of hardness.

"And you blame me for that—of course!" he retorted quickly. "I'm to blame for dragging you off out here, away from everything you care for. Yes, I know! And that's just the hardest part of it all for me. And you know how it grinds me, and yet you keep rubbing it in! I wish to Heaven I hadn't let you come with me! I could have stood it much better alone!"

Edith was silent, and looked at her husband's bowed head with an air of not seeing him. She was trying to suppress the fierce impulse to cut back at him. She was saying to herself mechanically: "It's nerves—temper—the heat."

And there was a bitter flavor of contempt in her thought, in her silence. She could not help a little despising "nerves." This weakness seemed to her childish, foolish, unworthy of a reasoning being, unworthy a man, who ought to be master of himself; above all, unworthy of Jack Challoner, the man she had loved and married.

She had loved him partly for his strength, his intellectual grasp, his energy and success among men; at least, it was this that had struck her imagination. All her devotion to him had risen

up to meet the blow of his nervous breakdown, for which, indeed, she had felt that her own ambition for him was partly responsible, though not more than his own. With no thought of complaint, no word of regret, she had given up—for a time indefinite—the life she enjoyed so keenly; and she had given all her strength, her buoyancy, to make their new life endurable, to sustain Jack in his boredom, his fits of despair.

For a time complete rest and open-air activity had seemed to answer her hopes for him; they had begun to plan for going home. Then, lately, with this onset of sulphurous weather, his sleeplessness had returned and he had gone to pieces again. And his irritability, which he seemed now perfectly unable to control, constantly stirred Edith's quick temper. She tried to control her speech and usually succeeded, but the effort left her cold to him.

There were depths in her below this surface play. Secretly, she mourned over him, she pitied him passionately, she feared for him, for their life and happiness together. Sometimes, under this strain, thrown absolutely upon one another as they were, the basis of their relation seemed to be giving way. If they could no longer love one another, as they had done for five years of married life, what would become of them? They had no child; they were appallingly free to separate. Of late they had quarreled more and more; and under the repetition of such speeches as this last one of Jack's, Edith had begun to feel that it might come to separation.

And now as she looked at him, silent, and looked over his bent head at the plain swimming in a dull haze, all the universe seemed to her like this outlook—ashes and cinders, burned refuse of the devouring sun. Love was like that sun, she thought. It could burn and scorch all the life out of one's world and leave it—the world that had

been so glorious, so full of the vigor and joy of quick-moving life!—leave it like this.

Jack lit a cigarette with shaking fingers, and turned in his chair away from the table.

"I shall go away to-day, somewhere," he said.

"And shall I stay here?" asked Edith.

"Just as you like. You can come with me, if you wish. I don't doubt, though, that you'll be glad enough to be off by yourself for a while."

He smoked nervously and flicked the ash off his cigarette with trembling fingers. His tone was brusque and cold. And all the time the look of his thin, averted cheek, his flickering eyelid, the sad and bitter curve of his mouth, said to her—and she well understood: "Say that you want to go with me! Say you don't mind it! Say that I'm not dragging the life out of you! Say that you love me!"

And she would not, or could not, answer the deeper speech. Something in her felt with pain and tenderness that appeal; she could almost have taken him in her arms and wept over him as if he had been a sick child, as often he seemed to her. But—after all, he was not a child, and childlessness in him deeply irritated her. It was so unutterably foolish, this bickering! And a demon of perverseness made her say coolly:

"Very well—if you really don't need me."

"Need you? No, I don't," he retorted instantly. "I'm sure we shall be better apart for a while. Then at least I shan't have to feel that I'm murdering you by inches!"

"It isn't fair to say that!" she cried, and tears sprang to her eyes. "You have no right to say it! I haven't complained. I—"

"Well, your look complains—everything about you! Don't you think I can see? Can't I see that you're long-

ing every moment to go back to the East—that you want your friends, your amusements, your admirers? Can't I see what letters mean to you? You have a letter from Jim Graves or Telson and you live on it for days! I don't blame you at all. It's perfectly natural. There's no reason why you should be anything but bored, stuck out here with me. Only what I say is that it doesn't help *me*. On the contrary, it worries me to death, feeling your unhappiness, and—"

"It isn't true that I haven't helped you! I know I have, and you know it, too! You wouldn't have said this sort of thing till just lately. I suppose the weather has got on your nerves!"

"It's you that get on my nerves!" he retorted, with petulance and anger.

"Well, then, you'd better go away alone," she said.

"Very well, I will. But there's no reason why you should stay here. I think you'd better go home. You can go to the country there somewhere for the present, where you know people and it will be amusing for you."

"Amusing! I feel like being amused!"

"Well, you will, you know, when you get there. And I shall be more comfortable if you are. You weren't made, you know, to stand much of a strain."

"I don't know about that," said Edith, in a low voice. "I rather think I have stood some strain."

"Oh, I know you're a martyr! But you needn't be one a day longer. You can go whenever you like."

"You needn't say that to me again, Jack Challoner! I *will* go—and I shall not come back."

"Very well—as you like," he said, and he tried to light another cigarette, but his hands trembled so that he could not hold the match.

Edith looked at him, her eyes blazing, but he did not meet her look.

At this moment Jerome, the cowboy,

lounged up from the direction of the barn and took off his hat with a slow:

"Good morning! Reckon you don't want to ride this morning, do you?"

"Yes," said Challoner hurriedly, getting up from his chair. "You can saddle my horse. I'll be ready in ten minutes."

"Well—just as *you* say," drawled Jerome. "It's pretty hot—not that the heat's goin' to hurt you any—but it's darned queer weather!"

Challoner walked away toward the house, his head bent.

The cowboy looked up speculatively at the hazy mountains and put the back of one sunburned hand to his cheek, which was streaked with sweat.

"Wish it would rain and put out them fires," he said. "This weather don't please *me*. Well, I'll saddle up, then. Your horse, too, ma'am?"

"No, not mine, thank you," said Edith vaguely.

She always liked to look at Jerome. The swing of his beautiful body in its careless and easy dress, the slightly rakish angle at which the hat sat on his black hair, his grave face, burned to an Indian tint, his piercing whistle as he went about his work, his youth, his physical tone, all pleased her. Even at this moment she looked at him and said something to keep him there a moment longer.

"Do you think this weather will last long?" she asked.

"Shouldn't think so, ma'am. Reckon we'll have a storm, or something. It ain't *all* them forest fires. You can see it yourself. The air feels queer. I never seen this sort o' weather here before."

"No—I don't think we can stand it here if it's like this," said Edith absently.

"Oh, it ain't goin' to last, ma'am. It ain't natural, this dead kind of air. Why, heat, you know, *heat* ain't goin' to

hurt you none. You can go out in this sun any time you want and get into a good sweat, and it's *good* for you. But not like this. It wilts you right out, this kind of air. Better not go out."

He nodded gravely and went back to the barn. And Edith watched him go and said to herself: "I wonder what will happen to take the life out of him—to eat up his youth and dull his look and make him—like the rest of us!"

The Chinaman came out to take away the dishes, and Edith rose and walked slowly toward the house. She paused for some moments before it, in the shade of the oak tree. The house was so small—hardly big enough for two people who had—quarreled. From where she stood she could hear Jack moving about in his bedroom—the slam of a drawer, a smothered exclamation, the sound of a shoe flung across the room. She went in, finally, into the sitting room, and sat down on a couch. When Jack had done dressing and had gone out for his ride, she would begin. Her trunks were in a small room off the kitchen; Jerome could get them out for her.

She looked about the small, stuffy room to see what things she must pack. The books—no, she would leave all those, and the little silver and porcelain vases and dishes that were scattered about to hold flowers or fruit or cigarette ashes. Then it occurred to her that it would bother Jack to pack these things, and she decided to take them. The Navaho blankets that covered the uneven floor and the couch—those she must pack, too, and the Indian jars and baskets that she had amused herself by collecting. The corners of the room were full of these; and she had had shelves put up round the walls, just under the ceiling, to hold the pottery—jugs and bowls, large and small, buff, red, brown, and black, like the burned, bare earth. She glanced up at these and reflected that she had no

boxes to pack them in. There were inconveniences in being ordered off at a moment's notice!

A suffocating weight seemed to press on her breast, almost to choke her breathing; yet she felt quite cool and calm. This was how it was, then, when the crash had really come! One felt perfectly dead and unconcerned. She heard every quick, nervous movement that Jack made behind his closed door. She thought: "He can't find his belt, or something. Shall I go in and find it for him?" But she sat still and looked at the floor and waited, in a dull sort of dream.

This was what it was like, then! This was what it would be like, all the rest of one's life. A dry earth, a sky of brass, a perpetual choking pain in one's breast—Yes, this it would be to see love go out of one's life, and to live on without it. Edith was but thirty. She felt infinitely old, and yet she saw that there would be infinite years to live through, alone. She knew well for how little, in comparison, those other things of her life would count—the things that Jack had reproached her with. She might still have those things. But—it was true, as she had said to him, that *he* had been her life. And now it was all ending in ashes and failure—the bitterness of death.

How cruel to say that she had not helped him, that she had hurt him, that he would be better off without her! And all this because she could not at all times seem happy! It was this, she knew—he could not bear to see her depressed and sad. It hurt his pride that she should be unhappy with *him*! And also he did deeply desire her happiness, she knew. But how could she seem happy and at ease, with the strain of his illness, his moodiness, his perpetual outbreaks of temper? And for this he was ready to break up their life together! Bitterness flooded her heart, scalding tears came to her eyes. This

it was to have failed, to see the promise of one's youth die away, unfulfilled.

In the dead heat of the day she felt suddenly faint. A dizziness came upon her, and, as she got to her feet, rather frightened, it seemed that the solid earth rocked and trembled under her. She staggered and fell against the wall, which seemed to lean unaccountably away from her. She heard something fall in the next room. At the same moment a horse rushed by the window at full speed, and Jerome's voice rose in an expostulatory shout. The kitchen door slammed; Wong, the Chinaman, ran out into the yard. Jack was tugging at the door of his room, which was hard to open. Again came that shuddering vibration. This time the whole house trembled and creaked; a jar fell from the shelf and crashed on the floor. Edith ran to the door of the bedroom, which opened inward, and threw her weight against it. It swung open, and she fell into Jack's arms and clung to him.

"What is it?" she gasped. "An earthquake?"

"Of course. Come along out of this," said Jack calmly, pushing her out before him.

She clung to his arm in apparent terror. She was, in fact, frightened, but not nearly so much so as she seemed, for it suited her to cling to him. Before they could cross the room and get out of the house, the floor tilted up with a wrenching sound, and there was a wild rain and crash of pottery as the whole contents of the shelves came down. Edith tried frantically to push Jack out of the door first, and so blocked the way for a moment. And as he used his superior strength and lifted her bodily out of the room, a great earthen bowl struck him on the head and shoulders, and he fell among its fragments.

Jerome carried him out of the house, as part of one wall and a corner of the

roof fell in, and laid him on the ground under a tree at a safe distance from the buildings. There was no other place to take him. The barn was rickety, and the tank house, where Jerome slept, seemed about to fall, the tank and the windmill toppling over to one side.

Jerome dashed off for some water. He was long in finding it; the olla suspended from a branch of the oak had swung and broken against the tree trunk, and he had to break in the kitchen door, which had jammed shut. Till he came back, Edith crouched on the ground beside Jack, rubbing his wrists and temples and gasping for breath. The sky was densely clouded now, the air blind with smoke and haze. She saw Jerome at last, running back with a bucket in each hand. There came a long roll of the earth, more terrifying than any sea in storm. The tank and the fans of the windmill lurched and fell, breaking down a tree that stood by the tank house. Edith felt her head whirling; she hid her face on Jack's breast. She thought dimly that they would die together, that perhaps he was already dead. Then she felt the faint beating of his heart.

"Oh, save him!" she cried. "Where is he hurt? Did it strike his head?"

Jerome knelt by the unconscious man and calmly poured a bucketful of water over his face. Edith helped to lift him up and supported his head on her shoulder.

"Jack, Jack!" she cried, and kissed him frantically, his wet cheek and forehead and hair. "Oh, do you think he is much hurt? Can you go for a doctor?"

"Yes'm, I can," Jerome said, "if you want me to leave. But where can we put him? I think it's goin' to rain—or somethin'."

"Oh, leave him here. I don't dare take him in anywhere. I couldn't get him out by myself. If it rains, I'll hold an umbrella over him. Only hurry, hurry!"

"Yes'm. But if it *rains*, you know, an umbrella won't do no good. We could put him in the tank house. There ain't no weight on it now, you see, and it'll sure stand, all right. I think he's comin' to."

Jack stirred and opened his eyes.

"*Jack, dearest!*" cried Edith, in a choked voice. "You aren't badly hurt, are you?"

He tried to sit up, but fell back weakly, with a groan.

"No, it's my shoulder," he gasped.

"Collar bone broken," announced Jerome, after a rapid investigation. "Now, I tell you, ma'am, we'll just put him in the wagon and take him straight off to the doctor. It's no good stayin' here."

With a glance at the sky, Jerome leaped up and ran to the barn, where a sound of furious kicking announced the disturbance of the tethered horses. He rolled out the light wagon, filled the body with hay, brought out a nervous horse, and harnessed up, all with a rapid fire of oaths and expostulations. He shouted and waved to a white figure that fluttered about like a decapitated hen among the orange trees. But Wong, the Chinaman, declined to understand that something was wanted from the house, and Jerome, muttering curses, hitched the horse to a tree and ran, himself, to get the pillows.

Meantime, Edith, sitting on the ground and holding Jack in her arms, implored him, between kisses, to say that he was not much hurt.

"No—what's a collar bone? I'm not hurt at all," he said quite calmly. "Got a nasty bruise, that's all."

"Yes, you are hurt! You are, you poor darling, and it's my fault! And you might have been killed!"

"How your fault? Did you cause the earthquake?" inquired Jack, with a wan smile.

"Oh, you know if it hadn't been for me, you would have got out all right!"

Oh, Jack, will you forgive me for being such a nuisance to you?"

She choked and sobbed, and the tears ran down her cheeks.

"Why, look here, you silly girl, didn't you help me out? That door was jammed against the floor somehow, and I might not have got it open without you!"

"No—no! There was the window! But it's nice of you to say it!"

"What are you crying for, you idiot?" he murmured, and he kissed her.

"I know I *have* been—" she sobbed.

"What? An idiot?"

"Yes—a nuisance, I meant. I have been horrid lately, and I don't blame you for wanting to get rid of me."

"Dearest," said Jack gravely, "you know whether I want to get rid of you. Not as long as you want to stay with a cross-grained brute like me—"

A kiss interrupted him. He smiled; the black lashes drooped over his eyes; he looked oddly, pathetically content, like a child comforted after some hurt.

Edith's arms tightened about him and gave him a twinge of pain; but he let no sign of it appear.

"I love you," she said passionately. "And I will never go away unless you actually throw me out!"

Jack laughed caressingly. His face now looked as she loved to see it—softened, brightened, touched by a sudden magic color of youth and joy.

She wept softly. And all the while she was vaguely troubled by the sight of Jerome's haste as he made his preparations for flight. Was it that Jack was really more hurt than she thought? She was terrified as this occurred to her, and he saw the sudden fright in her face.

"What is it, dearest?" he asked.

"You—— I'm afraid you're really hurt, Jack."

"Nonsense! I'll get up and prove to you I'm not."

And, in spite of her protestations, he did get up and walked to the wagon. He was put down on the straw and pillows, and Edith got in and sat beside him. She went just as she was, in her crumpled white dress and hat, without a glance into the wrecked house. Jerome locked the front door and jerked the back door into place. Then he leaped into his seat, and they started. Jerome's broncho was tied by a lariat to the back of the wagon.

"I'll go and find Mr. Challoner's horse afterward," he explained. "The critter bolted when the quake came."

A white figure, wringing its hands and moaning, fluttered after them for a little way. But Jerome, turning, shook his fist at Wong, the Chinaman, and declined to stop for him.

"I hate chinks!" he said. "They've got about as much spunk as a rat—no, not as much. And, besides, we ain't got no time to lose."

He whipped the nervous horse into its fastest trot. And before long Edith saw the reason for his haste. There came a sudden coolness in the air, and it rained. The water came down in blinding, torrential sheets. They put a rug over Jack, and Edith huddled beside him, drenched to the skin, splashed with mud; and they made for the doctor's house along roads whose inches of dust had become thick mire. The mountains were blotted out; the plain showed in vague, silvery glimpses through the flooding rain. In the midst of this fierce outburst the sky seemed already lighter, and a breath of freshness stirred over the thirsty land.

Some days later, they drove back to the cottage from their temporary shelter to see what could be saved from the wreck. Wong, the Chinaman, was living precariously in the kitchen, and nothing had been touched in the house.

It had been raining steadily from the day of their departure until to-day. The broken roof had sagged in at the middle; the sitting room was a mass of ruin. Edith turned away after one look, but Jack went in and picked up the small silver dishes, tarnished and full of wilted flowers; there was nothing else to take. They made merry over the total amount of salvage—some clothes and linen, stained with rain, and the silver. Books, upholstery, and crockery were hopelessly gone.

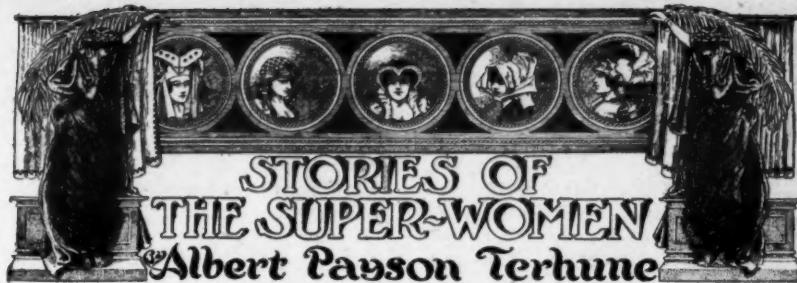
"It was a pretty complete smash, wasn't it?" said Jack, as they stood outside, while the trunks were being put into the wagon, and contemplated their former abode.

In spite of his lamed shoulder, he was looking much more vigorous than for some time past. He breathed in the air with evident pleasure; it was crisp and cool and full of perfume from the pink roses that covered the caving wall of the house. The ruin looked almost cheerful under its cloak of fresh green and blossoms.

"It was," answered Edith. "But—a lucky one, perhaps?"

Her eyes sparkled, too, as she smiled at him. She smiled—but she shivered a little, too, and turned away from the sight of the house.

"It was rather dangerous," she said. Jack put his arm about her. They stood looking off across the plain, already miraculously touched with freshness, with a light breath of green. The sky was a deep, cloudless blue, the mountains violet and purple, and the farther range had a touch of snow on its high crests. Their eyes were grave as they looked. Danger had passed them by, but it had left its mark. Their earth, perhaps, seemed more fragile, the crust that covered its terrible forces of unrest thinner, than of old. They clung to one another, and looked out on the reviving beauty of that earth with graver eyes.



Find the Woman. You will find her in almost every generation, in almost every country, in almost every big city—the super-woman. She is not the typical adventuress; she is not a genius. The reason for her strange power is occult. When philosophers have thought they had segregated the cause—the formula—what you will—in one particular super-woman or group of super-women, straightway some new member of the clan has arisen who wields equal power with her notable sisters, but who possesses none of the traits that made them irresistible. And the seekers of formulas are again at sea. What makes the super-woman? Is it beauty? Cleopatra and Rachel were homely. Is it daintiness? Marguerite de Valois washed her hands but twice a week. Is it wit? Pompadour and Du Barry were avowedly stupid in conversation. Is it youth? Diane de Poictiers and Ninon de l'Enclos were wildly adored at sixty. Is it the subtle quality of feminism? George Sand, who numbered her admirers by the score—poor Chopin in their foremost rank—was not only ugly, but disgustingly mannish. So was Semiramis. The nameless charm is found almost as often in the masculine, "advanced" woman as in the delicate, ultrafeminine damsel. Here are the stories of super-women who conquered at will. Some of them smashed thrones; some were content with wholesale heart-smashing. Wherein lay their secret? Or rather, their secrets? For seldom did any two of them follow the same plan of campaign.

GEORGE SAND The Hopelessly Ugly Siren

AVERY famous woman discovered once that men are not paragons of fidelity. Or, finding that one man was not, she decided that all men were alike. And to Jules Sandeau, who had deceived her, she exclaimed, in fine, melodrama frenzy:

"My heart is a grave!"

"From the number of its occupants," drawled Sandeau, "I should rather call it a cemetery."

The woman, too angry to grasp the meaning of the ungallant speech, raged on:

"But I will be avenged. I shall write the tragedy of my love—in romance form—and—"

"Why not in city-directory form?" suggested the man.

And the loverly conversation ended in hysterics.

The woman was Amantine Lucile Aurore Dupin Dudevant. History, literature, and the annals of superwomen know her as George Sand.

As one may glean from her verbal tilt with Sandeau, she was not a recluse or a misanthropist. In fact, she numbered her ardent wooers by the dozen. Her love life began at a convent school when she was little more than a child, and it endured until old age set in. Perhaps a list of its victims, as Sandeau so cruelly hinted, would have resembled a city directory. It certainly would have borne a striking likeness to a cyclopedic index of Europe's nineteenth-century celebrities; for it embraced such immortal

names as De Musset, Sandeau, Balzac, Chopin, Carlyle, Prosper Mérimée, Liszt, Dumas père, and many another. So many demigods knelt at her shrine that at last she wrote:

I am sick of great men. I would far rather see them in Plutarch than in real life. In Plutarch or in marble or in bronze, their human side would not disgust me so.

And the personality, the appearance, the Venusberg charm of this heart monopolist? One instinctively pictures a svelte form, a "face that launched a thousand ships," and all the rest of the sirenian paraphernalia that instinctively attach themselves to one's mental vision of a wholesale fracturer of hearts. Here is Balzac's description of her. It is found in a letter written to Madame Hanska in 1838, when George Sand was at the acme of her superwoman career:

I found her in her dressing gown, smoking an after-dinner cigar, beside the fire in an immense room. She wore very pretty yellow slippers with fringes, coquettish stockings, and red trousers. Physically, she has acquired a double chin, like a well-fed priest. She has not a single white hair, in spite of her terrible misfortunes. Her beautiful eyes are as sparkling as ever.

When she is sunk in thought, she looks just as stupid as formerly—as I told her—for her expression lies wholly in her eyes. She goes to bed at six in the morning and rises at noon. (I go to bed at six in the evening and rise at midnight; but, of course, I am conforming myself to her habits.) She smokes to excess and plays, perhaps, too much the grande dame.

Carlyle, still less merciful, snarls forth the following wholly Carlylean epitome of George Sand's looks:

"She has the face of a horse!"

Another contemporary writer declares:

"Her hair is as black and shiny as ebony; her swarthy face is red and heavy; her expression fierce and defiant, yet dull."

So much for the verity of traditional siren dreams! So much, too, for the

theory that beauty or daintiness or feminism has anything to do with the nameless charm of the world's superwomen.

George Sand came honestly, if left-handedly, by her cardiac prowess. For she was a great-great-granddaughter of Adrieine Lecourreur and Marshal Saxe; two of history's stellar heart breakers—a fact of which she made much.

Her father was a French army officer—Lieutenant Dupin—and as a mere baby his only daughter, Aurore, was acclaimed "daughter of the regiment." Decked out in a tiny uniform, the ugly duckling ran wild in the army posts where her father was stationed, and joined right boisterously in the soldiers' rough sports.

Later, she was sent to a convent. From her own description of this particular retreat, it was a place that crushed out all normal and childish ideas and filled the growing mind with a morbid melancholy. Yet it was there that love first found the girl.

The victim—or victor—was one Stephane de Grandsaigne, professor of physiology. Under his tuition she developed a queer craving for dissection—a fad she followed, in psychic form, through life. The love scenes between herself and her adored professor were usually enacted while they were together dissecting a leg or an arm or probing the mysteries of retina and cornea.

It was a semigruesome, unromantic episode, and it ended with suddenness when the pupil was sent out into the world. There a husband was found for her. He was Casimir Dudevant, a man she liked well enough and who was mildly fond of her. They lived together for a time in modified content. Two children were born to them.

By and by, Casimir took to drink. Many people refused to blame him. Indeed, there are present-day students of George Sand's life who can find a host

of excuses for his bibulous failings. But once, coming home from a spree, Casimir forgot to take his wife's lofty reproaches with his wonted good nature.

In a flash of drunken anger, he struck her. And she left him.

The high spirit of her act of independence is marred just a little by the fact that she chanced to be in love with another man. This other man was Aurelian de Seze, a ponderous country magistrate. The affair was brief. Presently the two had parted. And George Sand, penniless, went to Paris to make a living by literature.

She obtained hack work of a sort, lived in the typical drafty garret so dear to unrecognized genius, and earned for a time only fifteen francs—three dollars—a month. It was the customary nadir, wherein one gathers equipment for success.

Then she met Jules Sandeau. He was a lawyer who dabbled in literature. He fell in love with the lonely woman and she with him. They formed a literary partnership. Together they wrote novels and began to achieve a certain measure of good luck. Their novels were signed "George Sand." Why, no one knows. It was a pen name devised by the feminine member of the novelistic firm.

But before long Sandeau was left far behind in the race for fame. His more or less fair partner wrote a novel on her own account. It was "Indiana." Like Byron, she woke one morning to find herself famous. The book had lifted her forever out of obscurity and need.

At almost the same time she entered Sandeau's study one day just in time to see him kiss another woman. The other woman chanced to be their laundress, who, presumably, was more kissable, if less inspiring, than was the newly acclaimed celebrity on whom

Sandeau had been lavishing his fickle affections.

There was a scene, unequaled for violence in any of their joint novels. And in the course of it occurred the repartee recorded at the beginning of this story. As an upshot, Sandeau followed Dudevant, De Seze, Grandsaigne, and the rest into the limbo of George Sand's discarded loves; where he was soon to be joined by many another and far greater man.

Her faith in men shattered for at least the fourth time, George Sand forswore fidelity and resolved to make others suffer; even as she liked to imagine she herself had suffered. The literary world was by this time cheering itself hoarse over her. And literary giants were vying for her love.

Out of the swarm, she selected Prosper Mérimée. The author of "Carmen" was then in his prime as a lion of the salons. To him George Sand gave her heart irrevocably and forever. Through youth and maturity they worshiped each other—for eight consecutive days. On the ninth day, George Sand informed *Carmen's* creator that he was far too cynical to be her ideal any longer. Mérimée retorted that her "pose of divine exaltation" was better fitted to an angel than to an ugly woman who continually smoked cigars and who swore as pyrotechnically as one of her father's most loquacious troopers. So the romance ended.

Followed a bevy of loves well-nigh as brief, most of whose heroes' names are emblazoned on the book backs of the world's libraries. And after this populous interregnum, came Alfred de Musset.

De Musset was a mere boy. But his wonderful poetry had already awakened Europe to ecstasy. He was the beau-ideal of a million youthful lovers and their sweethearts; even as, a generation earlier, Byron had been.

It was in 1833 that he and George

Sand met. De Musset had seen her from afar and had begged for an introduction. She was six years older than he, and the prettiest girls in France were pleading wistfully for his smile. But, at sight, he loved the horse-faced, almost middle-aged swearer of strange oaths and smoker of strong cigars. Hence his plea to be introduced.

Sainte-Beuve, to whom he made the request, wrote, asking leave to bring him to one of George Sand's "at homes." The same day she returned a most positive refusal, writing:

I do not want you to introduce De Musset to me. He is a fop, and we would not suit each other. Instead, bring Dumas; in whose art I have found a soul, if only the soul of a commercial traveler.

But De Musset, unrebuffed, succeeded in his ambition. He managed to secure an introduction to her at a banquet given by the *Revue des Deux Mondes* editors. And almost at once his love was reciprocated. Then began a union that was alternately the interest, the scandal, and the laughing-stock of a continent.

Each of the lovers was a genius; each had been pedestaled by the world; each was supposed to live on a rarified plane far above the heads or the ken of mere earth folk. The love affair of two such immortals might reasonably be expected—*was expected*—to be akin to the noble romances of poetry.

As a matter of fact, its three-year course was one long series of babyish spats, of ridiculous scenes, and of behavior worthier the inmates of a madhouse or a kindergarten than of the decade's two master intellects.

George Sand expected De Musset to live on the heights of bloodless idealism. When he did so, she berated him as heartless. When he failed to, she denounced him as an animal. She was never content with whatever course he might follow. Yet she was madly in love with him.

During their brief separations, she avalanched him with letters; some furious, some imploring, some wildly affectionate, some drearily commonplace. Here is an extract from one, displaying a fair sample of her warmer moods:

Is it nothing to you to have tamed the pride of such a woman as I, and to have stretched me a suppliant at your feet? Is it nothing to you that I am dying of love?—torment of my life that you are!

In the course of the cranky affair they journeyed to Italy. There, in turn, both fell ill. And there, through the medium of the sick room, both met a handsome young Italian doctor, Pietro Pagello. Who, by the way, was still living, a very few years ago, at the age of ninety.

Pagello's dark good looks, and his vivacity temporarily swept George Sand's heart far out of poor convalescent De Musset's reach. She became blindly infatuated with the young doctor. De Musset, jealously sick and sickly jealous, was quick to see how matters stood. And with true Gallic sensationalism, he rose to the dramatic occasion.

First he swore eternal brotherhood and loyalty to the doctor—whom he scarcely knew—and then, joining the embarrassed Pagello's hand to George Sand's, the poet tearfully declaimed:

"I know all. You love each other. Take him, Aurore, as the parting gift of a lover you have ceased to love. Take her, Pietro, as a memento of your sworn friend. Adieu, both of you—forever!"

De Musset strode from the room in a style that would have evoked an applause storm from even a deaf-and-dumb gallery. He left Italy and came back to France. There he loudly bewailed his fate and moaned rhythmically anent the false flame of woman's love.

Meanwhile, George Sand found to her surprise that she loved the dra-

matic De Musset far more than she loved Pagello. She followed De Musset to Paris, bringing Pagello along for good measure.

When she had gone to Italy with De Musset, Paris had gasped. Even the usual latitude allowed to geniuses had been perilously stretched. When De Musset had returned, Orpheuslike, weeping all over the strings of his lyre, Paris had wept with him. But now that the heroine of the escapade followed in full chase of the discarded one, dragging his successor in her wake, Paris howled with inextinguishable laughter.

De Musset, poetically sensitive to every change of opinion, refused to make himself ridiculous. While renewing his vow of brotherly friendship for Pagello, he utterly refused to see George Sand, or to answer one of her thousand beseeching letters.

Pagello, too, began to feel supremely uncomfortable in his thankless rôle of excess baggage. He squirmed nervously in search of a door of escape. He quickly found one.

"Monsieur de Musset must hate me for what I have done," he announced to all who would stop laughing long enough to listen to him. "He has probably sworn a blood feud against me. I will not remain here to become the victim of a vendetta."

And he fled incontinently to his native Italy, leaving George Sand alone to face the now redoubled spasms of public mirth.

Tragically humorless, deaf to snicker and guffaw, she set herself to the tedious task of winning back De Musset. When letters were of no avail, she sought to waylay him in the street or elsewhere. Forewarned, he kept to his rooms.

Then she stationed herself on his doorstep and wept there, like a modern and uglier Niobe, for all to see. De Musset kept still closer hidden from view.

In desperation, the unhappy woman resolved to follow the historic example of Ninon de Lenclos in reclaiming an errant lover. She cut off her heavy black hair—her one beauty—and sent it by messenger to the coy De Musset.

The sacrifice was vain. Perhaps the beauty-loving poet, remembering how homely she had looked even with her luxuriant hair, drew a vivid mind picture of what she must look like without it. At all events, he made no sign of forgiveness.

One day, De Musset, coming unguardedly out of his apartment, collided on the stairs with the weeping woman. There was a partial and very temporary reconciliation, followed soon by a permanent break.

George Sand, tingling with hurt pride, proceeded to write a novel, wherein, under a painfully thin and openwork veil, she told the story of her love affair with De Musset. It is waste of space to add that she told it from her own angle, depicting herself as a gentle, too-loving martyr, and painting De Musset as a false, affected, ludicrously worthless personage.

The novel set Paris to jabbering as noisily as it had just laughed. De Musset was regarded as a monster, a monument of duplicity, and his former sweetheart as a patient saint. But the poet was not long in preparing a counterblast.

Promptly he threw into the arena a book in which, under still thinner disguise, he gave his own version of the story. In this volume De Musset was a trusting lover, and George Sand a viper.

There were further recriminations, in print and out of it. Literary Paris was divided into two camps. Between the pro-Mussets and the pro-Sands, the war waged merrily. Swinburne crystallized the case in a deathless epigram:

"De Musset was wrong; but George did not behave as a gentleman should."

For a time, George Sand turned to her work for oblivion. She wrote eight hours a day. Her novels were among the foremost of the century. She was France's best-known woman. The men who had loved her served now as characters for her books, as had De Musset. Mercilessly she dissected them—memories of the physiology professor! —and held up to scorn their faults, their frailties, their crass humanness. There was gnashing of teeth. There was recognition—wholesale. There was protest. There were legions of threats to prosecute. Said merry old Abbé Liszt—himself a heart conqueror of renown:

"Each of your admirers, madame, is a butterfly which you lure to you by honey, impale upon the pin of jealousy or boredom, and finally vivisect in a novel."

After a mere breathing space came what was probably the grand passion of George Sand's ultrapassionate life; a romance with none of the ironic humor that lighted her affair with De Musset.

The hero—victim—what you will—was Frédéric Chopin, too-firey soul in too-fragile body. Genius, wonder musician, dreamer, the man had always been tossed on misfortune's waters, hammered by them till his mighty soul had well-nigh torn free from the failing flesh. And at this period, of all others, fate threw him into the life of George Sand.

He was slender, weak, almost effeminate in his unfleshliness. She was brutally robust, mannish, aggressive, his exact opposite. And they loved—loved more deeply, more all-absorbingly than either had loved before in a mutually long era of heart destroying. In fact, George Sand loved Chopin as she loved nothing else on earth—with the sole exception of her idolized self.

The hand of death was already on

Chopin when he and George Sand met. This supervital woman seemed to breathe into him some of her own tireless vitality. His health rallied. It was said by fanciful acquaintances that George Sand's life was keeping life in her lover. She heard and was glad, and hastened to proclaim the wonder to her friends, adding thereby a leaf to her martyr crown. By sheer will power and excess vital force she actually buoyed up her frail lover's sinking strength and gave him a new lease of living.

This did not prevent her from quarreling fiercely and frequently with him—as she always did with every man or woman who came into personal acquaintance with her.

Chopin begged her to marry him. She refused. One venture in matrimony had sufficed her. Not even to make happy the man she loved would she essay a second trial of wedlock.

In her first onrush of devotion for Chopin she could not blind herself to the fact that, even as she had tired of others, so she might one day tire of him. And divorces, in France, were not easy to get. Hence the dying Chopin's supreme wish went ungratified, as had many a lesser wish during his affair with her.

The sick composer had known many loves. Yet from the hour he met George Sand he seems to have been steadfast to that single devotion. It is not on record that he so much as aroused her ever-wakeful jealousy. And he is probably the only man of her love-starred carer who did not—which is odd, in view of this assertion by one of Chopin's biographers:

He found himself unable to avoid accepting some of the numberless hearts that were flung like roses at his feet. He could modulate from one love affair to another as fleetly and as gracefully as from one key to its remote neighbor.

Here, too, is the account given by a

later chronicler of the composer's meeting with George Sand:

One evening, as he was entering a house where a literary reception was in progress, Chopin fancied he was pursued by a violet-scented phantom. In superstitious fear, he would have left the house at once, but friends who were with him laughed away his dread and described the phenomenon as the fancy of a sick man's brain.

He entered the crowded salon and was forthwith presented to the guest of honor, a swarthy and strange-looking woman—the première novelist, Madame Dudevant—George Sand.

In his diary that same night Chopin wrote of his new acquaintance:

I do not like her face. There is something in it that repels me.

Yet within a day or so he was her admirer.

For a time all went as well as any love story could with such a heroine. She gloried in her power to build up for the moment her lover's waning strength. Her friends' praise of the feat was as music to her. But she was not the type of woman who can forever wait patiently upon a fretful convalescent's whims. Her self-sacrifice was a flash, not a steady flame.

And in time she girded at the restraints of playing nurse and vitality giver. Then, instead of boasting as before, she waxed complaining. She told the world at large how exacting and cross and tiresome Chopin was.

She once referred to him publicly as "that detestable invalid." She announced that she was his ever-patient comrade and nurse. There is no authority but hers to bear out the claim of patience. And so the once-beautiful relationship dragged out its weary length until George Sand could endure the strain no longer.

She deserted Chopin.

Not content with this final blow to the invalid who had loved her for years, she continued to vilify him. Among her complaints was one that has since

passed, in slightly altered form, into a good old reliable vaudeville wheeze. She wrote:

We never addressed a single reproach to each other except once. And that was from the first to the last time we met.

George Sand's desertion was Chopin's deathblow. He never rallied from it. He tried to mask his heartbreak by going about as before and appearing often in public. But even this was soon denied to him—not only by collapsed health, but from the danger of meeting his former divinity at the houses he chanced to visit or on the streets. One such lesson was enough for him. It was in a friend's crowded drawing-room. A historian describes the encounter:

Thinking herself unobserved, George Sand walked up to Chopin and held out her hand. "Frédéric!" she murmured, in a voice audible to him alone.

He saw her familiar form standing before him. She was repentant, subdued, and seeking reconciliation. His handsome face grew deadly pale, and without a word he left the room.

The end came soon afterward. Chopin's mortal illness struck him down. Dying, he sent for his lost love. Perhaps the message never reached her; perhaps she thought it a trick—she had tried something of the sort on De Musset; perhaps she did not realize that the time was so short.

At all events, she paid no heed to the frantic appeal that she come at once to the dying composer.

Hour after hour, Chopin waited for her, his ears strained for the sound of her heavy tread. At last he grew to realize that she would not obey the summons, that he would never again see her.

As hope fled, Chopin broke down and cried piteously.

"She promised I should die in no arms but hers!" he sobbed over and over.

And that night he died—no less than

seven different women claiming later to have taken his recreant sweetheart's place at his deathbed.

George Sand was conscience-stricken. She wrote and proclaimed long and more or less plausible reasons to account for her failure to go to Chopin. But no one who really knew her was convinced of her excuses' truth. And so ended one more of her heart stories.

De Musset, by the way, refused to admit her to his rooms when he himself lay dying—a grisly joke that Paris appreciated.

Back to her work, as once before, George Sand fled for forgetfulness. And her fame grew. She was the most prolific woman writer, by the way, in literature's history, writing, in all, twenty plays and more than one hundred novels.

An Englishman—name buried—courted her at about this time. Still miserable over Chopin's death—and far more so over the way people were talking about her treatment of him—she was decidedly waspish to the trans-Channel admirer. Seeking to win her interest by a literary discussion, he opened one conversation by inquiring:

"Madame Dudevant, what is your favorite novel?"

"'Olympia,'" she answered, without a second of hesitation.

"'Olympia?'" the Englishman repeated, vainly ransacking his memory. "I don't think I recall any book of that name."

"Of course you don't," she snapped. "I haven't written it yet."

And perhaps—or perhaps not—his British brain some day unraveled the meaning of her cryptic retort.

For her infidelities George Sand felt

no compunction. She wrote frankly concerning them:

I have never imposed constancy upon myself. When I have felt that love is dead, I have said so without shame or remorse, and have obeyed Providence that was leading me elsewhere.

By her marriage with Dudevant, she had had a son and a daughter. The daughter, Solange, inherited much of her mother's lawlessness, with none of the latter's inspiration. And now George Sand was to see how her own nature worked in another of the same blood.

She arranged a splendid marriage for Solange, a marriage with a man of rank and money. And on the very eve of the wedding Solange proceeded to elope with a poor sculptor, Clesinger by name.

The mother was equal to the emergency. She ran after the fugitives, caught them, bullied Clesinger into marrying Solange, hushed all scandal, and installed the young couple in a Paris flat, settling on them the bulk of her property. In revenge, Clesinger permanently estranged Solange from her mother.

Soon afterward George Sand's sway over men's hearts ceased. Whether she was weary of love, or whether love was weary of her, the old fascination deserted her. No more as lovers, but as profound admirers of her intellect, great men still flocked about her—Matthew Arnold, Flaubert, Feuillet, and a host of others. But it was now her brain alone they worshiped.

By many years George Sand outlived her charm, dying in 1876 at the age of seventy-two, her grandchildren about her—a smugly proper, if sadly anticlimacteric, ending to a career in which anticlimax had been almost as infrequent as propriety.

The Old Cock

BY

Ethel Train



NOBODY knew how long Mr. Richardson had lived at the club. Those who dined there were accustomed to seeing him seated at his own little table in the window, his pint bottle of sparkling Moselle before him, an electric candle with a green shade throwing a strong light upon the viands, before tasting which it was characteristic of him to pause contemplatively, with delicate hand stroking his silky beard.

While in no sense a recluse, he seldom invited any one to share his evening meal. He disliked, above all things, being hurried—goading nerves and digestion, as it were by the use of a spur, to undue efforts; a state of affairs easily avoidable when he was alone, since he never went "on" anywhere.

Being of a somewhat fastidious appetite, he could have wished that the food had been less palpably adapted to masculine requirements. Something dainty, a feminine touch here and there—this would have suited him to perfection. He carried his mild antagonism to club traditions a step farther, and experienced a feeling of irritation almost personal toward the great, slippery-leather sofas, the deep, lounging chairs, the massive, thick-legged tables that solidly embodied his fellow members' ideas of comfort.

Mr. Richardson was of slender build and erect carriage; his weight had not

varied a pound in twenty years; his immaculate white waistcoats had an inward curve—a fact in which he took a modest satisfaction, adjusting a fresh one every evening before the mirror in his room upstairs. Here, at least, the chairs were upright—graceful things of ancient gilt and crumbling enamel, which he had had the good fortune to pick up years before at auction and had hastily transferred to his own domain, where, under lock and key, he might practice his revolutionary doctrines without offense, sitting up under his lamp with his book, straight as any social leader in her opera box, as long as he pleased.

Though he entered into other lives largely as a spectator, he brought to bear upon them a judgment wholly unbiased, approaching them inevitably in the spirit of the playgoer who is prepared to enjoy the play, not to criticize it. He had fallen into this detached attitude unconsciously, years before, and had maintained it ever since. From his corner table he watched the surrounding faces, read in them indications of the emotions below the surface, glimpsed or guessed at many a life's history. Here he was never lonely; he sat apart, it was true, but the wireless apparatus of his mind connected him by a multitude of currents with his fellow men. Thus he held himself in instant readiness for more per-

sonal contact—should any one have need of him.

Few did, yet if any one of these men had been asked point-blank what he thought of Mr. Richardson, the question would have elicited instant and hearty commendation. But such a query was never put. The majority were so used to him that they did not think about him at all. If their glances rested on him for an instant now and again, he seemed as much a part of the furnishing of the room as the drawn curtain of claret-colored velour that formed a soft and agreeable background for his fine-cut features.

To this collective lack of perception there was one notable exception in the person of a lately acquired member—a young lawyer named Nicholas Holbrook. Him the old men had added to their ranks on the ground of the desirability of infusing new blood into an ultraconservative organization. He had lately blown in from another city, where he had been living for eight years with a wife who had been the most popular of one winter's metropolitan débantes, whom he had married at the end of her first season and had carried off to help him make a professional career. He had returned to take an opening found for him through her relatives, and they had settled themselves in a pretty uptown house, together with the fruits of their long exile—a bewitching daughter and two sturdy sons.

Nicholas Holbrook was an engaging creature, with a smile that made every one call him "Nick." He had not entered the pretentious portals of the club half a dozen times before all the men he knew there were doing it, and in no time at all each new one that he met was taking it up. Yes—even Mr. Richardson. Some one had introduced the young man to him one day, and entirely without encouragement and of his own initiative, Holbrook had since

caused the acquaintance to progress by leaps and bounds.

This stirred the older man to a secret and intimate delight. At first he played with the sobriquet in the solitude of his distant window, pronouncing it surreptitiously within his beard, rolling it under his tongue. Then, in the entrance hall, with his hand on his new friend's shoulder, he came out with it one afternoon, quite shamelessly and openly, aloud. To his satisfaction, his doing so was taken as a matter of course. The ice was broken—the thin, filmy crust rent at a breath, parting to reveal an infinite expanse of sun-dappled blue.

But Nick was not to be counted on in the evening, as he never dined at the club. He came in sometimes for a minute on his way home and then hurried off, well knowing that three eager faces were already pressed against the nursery windowpane, awaiting his return.

In past days, after dinner Mr. Richardson had been wont to join one group or another in the smoking room for a little chat, not sitting down, but passing on after a few moments to speak to some one else. His voice and manner were so self-contained, so quiet, that the keen edge of his wit was apt to miss the surface that it had been intended to graze and cut into thin air. He would scan the faces—stolid, dull, comfortable, or alert, as the case might be—for a gleam of response to his remark, and, if it did not come, he would take the sally back for future trial upon a fresh subject. He felt no disappointment. It amused him to play his little mental game of solitaire.

It was not his fault that of late years he had indulged less and less in this his only form of social intercourse. The reason was not far to seek. Let him approach a knot of men with ever so unobtrusive a step, stand ever so still on the outskirts of it, with ears attuned to the pitch of the conversation, all these

precautions proved of no avail. The very instant he was perceived, the talk was scattered to the four winds, and every man jack of them sprang to his feet.

"Good evening, Mr. Richardson!" one would say. "Won't you join us, sir?"

"Yes," another would urge hospitably. "Take *my* chair." And he would shove toward the newcomer one of the most exaggerated of the glazed horrors, in which he had been sprawling full length.

"Thank you," Mr. Richardson would reply courteously, with the faintest red showing in the smooth-grained skin of his thin cheeks. "I can't stop just now. Perhaps I'll join you later."

Later he would not join them, and they would not know that he had not.

Thus his aloofness grew apace, fed by the stupidity of the well intentioned, toward whom he cherished, however, no resentment. They were his brothers, the only family that he had, and as such he accepted them with indulgence, making the best of them. It was only when he became suddenly aware of a reflection of their attitude in the world outside that it caused him serious disturbance.

Time had treated him politely; he, who noticed all things else, had been obtuse to its flight; year in, year out, he had lived a life without variety, doing the same things in the same way. If it had been given him to watch the light dimming in another pair of eyes that looked familiarly into his own, the hair graying on a beloved brow, the consciousness of age would have come to him more mercifully. As it was, the awakening was ungentle. It occurred when he was hanging by a strap in the subway train one afternoon at the rush hour, being jostled and pushed on all sides and barely able to maintain his footing. He accepted this manhandling in a philosophical temper, feeling that,

had he wished to avoid it, he might have done so by taking a surface car. Besides, there were interesting types amid this turmoil of humanity, though it was difficult to ferret them out in a jam six deep.

As the train neared the platform upon which it was his intention to alight, he began to realize that it was a toss-up whether he would get to the door in time or no. He attempted a sinuous winding in and out, in the hope of accomplishing by skill what he never could have achieved by main force, and was succeeding beyond his expectations when superfluous aid came from an unexpected quarter.

The conductor, energetic, perspiring, in dirty uniform, and with high purpose in his soul, saw him.

"Let the old gent off, there!" he belowed, in a hoarse voice. "Ain't you got no respect for age? Let the old gent off!"

The good-natured crowd responded, and Mr. Richardson was impelled on his way with more haste than dignity. As the conductor grasped him under the elbow for a final shove, his passenger looked him quizzically in the eye.

"This is good of you, my friend," he said. "I hope some one will do the same for you some day."

Nick was late for lunch. During his eight years of married life, he had generally contrived to lunch at home on Saturdays, and his wife had never known him to fail of being from five to fifteen minutes behind time. Yet she was so constituted that the latest offense against the routine of her existence caused her a discomfort as acute and fresh as if it were the first occurrence of its kind.

"You're late!" she greeted him today, contriving to keep an eye on the two little boys, who were solemnly manipulating the soup spoons they held in cramped, clutching fingers. "I couldn't

keep the children waiting any longer, so we came in."

"I'll just go and wash my hands," said the delinquent, springing up the stairs two steps at a time.

The meal proceeded in silence; the buillon was consumed and the cups removed.

"Where's daddy?" asked little Gwen suddenly. "He's been up there *ever so long!*"

The steps became audible once more, descending with a clattering like that of half a dozen schoolboys.

"Coming, mother!" called Nick, from the hall.

It teased her dreadfully to be called "mother," and, indeed, she looked like the veriest slip of a girl in her softly clinging gown, with her flushed cheeks, her bright, reproachful eyes, her red lips.

Nick came over and kissed her, and, when she smiled, her lips parted, disclosing pearly teeth.

"What *have* you been doing all this time?" she questioned, trying not to forget, in the sunshine of his presence, what irregular habits he had.

"Guess," he invited.

"Answering the telephone!" suggested Gwen.

"'Ookin' at de goldfishes," hazarded Tommy, the infant.

"Windin' your watch," put in Ned.

"Reading the magazines," ended Mrs. Nick grimly.

"Right!" was the answer. "How did you hit it, old girl?"

His wife winced at the epithet. "They've just come," she rejoined. "I meant to put them where you wouldn't see them till afterward."

Nick laughed.

"I bet you didn't wash at all," his eldest son remarked.

"I *did!*" Nick asseverated earnestly. "Honest, I did!" And he held up a pair of spotless palms for the critical inspection of his offspring.

"Ned," said his mother, "you mustn't speak to father like that. It's not respectful. It's really your fault that he does it, Nick. You oughtn't to encourage him."

"Do you hear, son?" asked the parent. "Remember, you're to respect your poor old father."

Giggles greeted this. Even Mrs. Nick kept her countenance with difficulty. The expression of dismay in the clear, youthful eyes was almost too much for her.

"You always make a joke of everything," she said, half irritated, half amused, "so I never can make my point. But I *really* mean it. I'm serious. You've got to give up this behaving with the boys as if you were all three the same age. You carry it too far. I think it's time they began to call you 'sir.' That would remind them."

Nick's face was one protest.

"Sir!" he cried indignantly. "Sir! I never heard of such a thing!"

"I have," she replied. "My brothers always said it to papa."

"That's different," Nick retorted, with some heat. "It's all very well to say it to a white-headed codger like that. But imagine *me!* It'd spoil everything. We couldn't play bear! How could we all be bears and prowl around, if one of the bears had to be addressed as 'sir'?"

"Codger!" she took him up, leaving the main issue. "A white-headed codger! What a way to speak! If I didn't know how much you think of my father—"

"Of course I do!" he interrupted. "You're not used to me yet, after all these years. You forgot my early training. Why, my mother spoke of all her old lady friends to me by their first names. It was Mamie this and Susie that and Hannah something else, and they were all over sixty!"

"That's just it," she rejoined. "Early

training! Your mother never got over her surprise at producing an only son at the age of forty sufficiently to give you any. My sons are going to be brought up to know what manners are. You can't begin too soon. They already stand up whenever a lady comes into the room—that is, if they don't forget."

"Go ahead," said Nick good-humoredly. "Train 'em all you like. You might as well have *some* satisfaction. All I ask is that you don't work the 'sir' racket on *me!*"

She looked at him thoughtfully.

"Well," she conceded. "If you really mind as much as all that! They can practice on their grandfather, I suppose, though it's not the same as having somebody right in the house."

When the meal was ended, and husband and wife sat alone over their coffee, the latter reopened the subject.

"Gwenny," he said affectionately, "I do believe you're taking your lack of success in overcoming the influences of my youth to heart. Own up, now! Aren't you?"

Her eyes grew soft as she took in every detail of his person—his clean-cut, mobile face, humorous when it was animated, stern in repose; his vigorous frame, with the broad shoulders; his nervous, competent hands; above all, the something that was part of all this and supplemented it, the something that she had never been able to define or quite understand—an elusive charm that made him just the very nicest person in the world.

"There's nobody like you, Nick," she said. "That's why I've always wanted you to have *everything*."

"I can't," he replied soberly. "Nobody can. Why, I couldn't possibly learn your kind of manners! If I said I would, just to please you, I'd forget 'em the minute your back was turned. Think of all your other failures. Drafts, for one. Don't you remember how

hard you tried to make me get used to drafts? A fellow who was brought up by a nurse that rocked him in front of a register, with a hot potato at his ear! And what was the result? Sniffles, every time."

Mrs. Nick ignored the instance.

"You could if you wanted to," she maintained. "The trouble is that you don't want to. The only reason I care so much is because I'm afraid you'll be misunderstood. Oh, Nick, I'd hate that!"

"Don't worry," he soothed. "Who's going to misunderstand me? Not your father; he knows me down to the ground. Not your mother; she and I get on famously. Who, then?"

"Outsiders," said his wife. "People you've just met. That Mr. Richardson, for instance, who belongs to the club. I've never seen any one just like him; he's a typical gentleman of the old school. He looks as if he ought to be kept in a glass case and marked, 'Fragile—handle with care.'"

Nick's face lighted. "He is a good old cock, isn't he?" he replied heartily. "I'm glad you've met, and I want you to see each other often. He said he'd come up and have tea with you some afternoon."

"There you go again!" she cried, in real exasperation. "Old cock! Nick, you're hopeless! If Mr. Richardson should ever hear you!"

Nick set down his little coffee cup with the butterfly handle and, coming over, leaned toward her chair and took both her hands in his.

"Perhaps it's only a question of definition," he said gently, with one of those quick transitions of mood that had power to smooth ruffled surfaces on the instant. "Perhaps we mean the same thing."

A few days after this, Mr. Richardson, at about half past four in the afternoon, was putting the finishing touches to his toilet. Even in his shirt-sleeves

he looked well dressed, for his linen was of the finest and his necktie an exact match for his cuff buttons of mautue enamel, thinly edged with gold. A cutaway of London make lay upon the bed; it had lately replaced the frock coat that was now consigned to an inner peg in his closet. For although Mr. Richardson almost never had occasion to wear afternoon regalia, he wished to do credit to his friends when it *was* called for by not appearing out of date.

Having put on the coat, he extracted his tall hat from a leather hat box, brushed it very carefully with a soft brush, took the shining thing in hand, and in leisurely fashion descended the stairs. He was going to have tea by appointment with a very pretty lady, and he wished to time his arrival to the exact stroke of five o'clock.

He rode uptown on the top of a bus, not because the weather was particularly propitious, but because he had lately eschewed the interiors of public conveyances lest some one should spring up and offer him a seat. The greater his sensitiveness to such attentions, the more frequently he encountered them, until his desire to avoid these manifestations of human kindness assumed the proportions, almost, of an obsession.

Even the stage, which, in consideration of the payment of an extra nickel, was supposed to provide each of its passengers with a seat to which he or she held indisputable right, could not be counted on when he rode within. If seven large people happened to be spread along one side, leaving the eighth space a mere sliver, he was never suffered to slip into it and sit unmolested on the sharp end of his spine, as he had paid for the privilege of doing. As soon as he entered, some solicitous individual was sure to arise, explaining in tones audible to the whole company that he was going to get out at the next corner, anyway.

But on top it was perilous to stand

swaying from side to side, even for half a block. Besides, on so chilly a day half the seats were certain to be empty. He sprang up the unstable spiral that led to freedom at the summit, and, antelope-gloved hand holding on his hat, proceeded cautiously to a vacant green-slatted bench, where he remained in comparative peace of mind until the business part of the thoroughfare was left behind and the budding trees of the park on his left indicated to him that he was approaching his destination.

While he was walking over from the avenue, Mrs. Holbrook was completing her preparations for his reception. She had met him only once or twice, and they had exchanged but half a dozen words. It had been enough, however, for her to feel in him some subtle qualities that strongly appealed to her. She had been a little surprised, it must be confessed, that a personality so retiring should make an impression on Nick. But she was frankly glad that it was so; influences of that sort were just what he needed.

"Run along, now, children," she said. "I'll come up after you've had supper. I'm expecting a visitor."

The children hesitated. Father never told them to run along, mother only occasionally. They were trying to work out in their minds theories as to what manner of guest the one referred to might be, and whether of sufficient importance to warrant their taking their dismissal seriously.

"Is it a lady?" asked Ned.

"No; a man," was the answer. "Run along."

"What kind of a man?" pursued the inquirer.

"An old man—that is, I don't know—*rather* an old man. With a white beard. Now, Neddy, don't ask another question. Off with you."

"I want to see ol' man!" piped up Tommy.

"So do I," Gwendolin seconded. "Why can't we stay and see the old man, mother?"

"I didn't say an old man!" corrected their mother. "I said 'rather old.' You can't stay because I want things quiet. You're too noisy."

"Not me!" Gwendolin asserted. She was, in fact, a dainty, feminine thing, the reproduction of her mother.

"The *boys* are," returned the latter, wavering as she looked into the round eyes of her sons, who were standing in dangerous proximity to the sugar bowl, their fat legs wide apart.

"I wonder whether they'd be good," she thought. "If I could only be sure of their manners! You can never be sure of children at that age, and Nick spoils them so, letting them say whatever comes into their heads. Suppose they were to call Mr. Richardson 'old man'!"

This last possibility made her shudder and sealed the children's fate.

"Go at once," she said, in a tone they thought it prudent to obey. "And, Gwen—you can remember a message—you're a good messenger, you know. Tell Mary to keep all the doors shut upstairs."

They scampered off, the cheerful, staccato tones of their voices, growing more and more distant, filling the hallways with sweet reverberations. Their mother, listening absently, heard a door close. A profound stillness ensued, and her heart sank, she scarcely knew why. A moment later the bell rang, and presently she heard the elevator coming up. It was a tiny lift, close quarters for two. The parlor maid had waved Mr. Richardson into it and had entered after him, shutting grating and door, after which they two were borne aloft in uncomfortable proximity, the guest wondering at such ceremony, just for one flight. When they emerged, his guide led him to the drawing-room,

where his hostess was waiting beside the glittering tea tray.

"Oh, Mr. Richardson!" she greeted him, in unmistakable enthusiasm. "I'm so glad to see you!"

He could not find words expressive enough to couch the keenness of his own pleasure. To his mind, there was no picture so attractive as that of a gracious woman dispensing tea in her own house. That act was the perfection of the feminine touch, and it satisfied the craving for daintiness that was always near the surface of his thoughts.

His trim figure silhouetted against the white paneling of the room, he waited for her to sit down and begin to watch for bubbles in the kettle. But she seemed in no hurry to do so.

"It was so good of you to take the trouble to come," she continued appreciatively.

He shrank a very little. "Good of him"—"trouble"! How innocently she had put him in his place!

Across the yawning chasm of years her pretty air of deference had opened between them, he looked at her regretfully.

"Which chair will you have?" she went on, her eyes critically sampling two or three and eliminating each in turn. Finally she said, "Try this," laying her soft, ringed fingers on one, and, to his discomfiture, pushing it toward him. He accepted it with a smile, for his delicacy would not permit him to allow her to suspect that there was any flaw in her hospitality.

The kettle had begun to sing, and she sat down before it, toying with the cups.

His anticipation had become reality. The tea table, with its lace napery; the burnished silver; the flowered china; the woman, young, lovely—lashes sweeping cheek, head bent, hair over neck, and ears bewitchingly tendriled, one slender hand poised a knife above

an airy "angel" cake—every detail was perfect. Yet he sat before his picture a disappointed spectator, trying to keep the chill out of his eyes and voice.

She did not find him easy to talk to, though she tried one subject after another—the Irish players; the Jornsen lectures; the exhibition of textiles at the Museum of Art. She knew very little of any of these things, and cared less; she chose them merely because she thought they would be suitable to his mature judgment and experience.

When he tentatively endeavored to divert the current into more homely channels and asked whether he might see the babies, she put him off. She had no wish to risk dispelling the atmosphere of order and dignity with which she had been at such pains to surround this honored guest.

He slowly swallowed two cups of tea and arose to take his leave. Nor could the hopes she held out of Nick's ultimately joining them persuade him to delay his departure.

"I know that wretched husband of yours too well," he said, in his mild way. "He never had any intention of coming at all."

Her eyes grew as round as those of her little boys.

"Oh, Mr. Richardson," she asseverated earnestly, "I think you must be mistaken. I'm sure nothing but the most important business would have kept Nick away when he knew that *you* were going to be here. He has the greatest admiration and respect for you."

His own feeble attempt to flick the conversational ball into the air had signally failed. There was no bounce to it. He let it lie where it had fallen, and, in grave silence, ceremoniously bent over her hand.

As he descended the stairs, there was just one thing that kept him from feeling utterly flat and depressed. It was a certainty upon which he would have

staked his all—the certainty that in the breast of Nick, alone of all men on earth, the qualities typified by the words "admiration" and "respect" did not exist.

The parlor maid was waiting in the entrance hall with his overcoat in her hands. She put it on and opened the front door. Hastening forth into the keen air, he came into violent collision with something, and was clutched in the grip of a pair of iron arms.

"Let up! Let up!" he protested. "You're cracking my ribs!"

Nick released him.

"Hello!" he said. "Why don't you look where you're going? Where are you off to, anyway, in such a rush?"

"I've been having tea with your wife," was the answer. "Now I'm going back to the club."

"No, you don't!" returned the other, slipping an arm through his and fac- ing him about; "not after I've nearly broken my neck to get here! You're coming right in again; and, what's more, you're going to stay to dinner."

"No, no!" cried Mr. Richardson. "I—I've got an engagement. A very im- portant engagement."

"You're lying!" Nick retorted calmly. "Are the kids watching for me?"

"I don't know," answered the help- less victim. "I haven't seen them."

"What?" Nick shouted. "Not seen the kids? Well, we'll soon fix *that*." He opened the door with his key.

The parlor maid had disappeared, and Mr. Richardson got out of his coat unassisted, while his host did likewise. Then, taking the guest by the arm once more, he hustled him up the stairs in short order.

Flushed and panting, Mr. Richardson encountered his amazed hostess on the landing.

"This—barbarian—" he gasped.

"Can't stop now," commanded the relentless Nick. "Two more flights. Hurry up, or they'll be in bed. Their

mother makes them have a bedtime. Nonsense, I think."

Mr. Richardson, propelled onward, was soon lost to her view. She stood very still in the hall, with her hand on the banister, for at least five minutes, thinking hard.

The change in Mr. Richardson's expression, the unguessed twinkle in his eye, the color in his cheeks—whence had they come? Nick's behavior had outraged all the proprieties, and the older man had seemed to like it. No, like was not the word. He had loved it; exulted in it; been not only actually, but spiritually, carried off his feet. Mrs. Nick's small, shapely head was in a whirl, as she, too, mounted to the nursery.

The happenings there for the next half hour must have been stimulating, for the three adults emerged looking as if they had been out coasting under a winter sun.

"Where are the cigarettes, Gwen?" asked Nick, when they were once more in the drawing-room. "I dare say you've found out what a cigarette fiend this man is."

She looked contrite. "I'm so sorry I didn't offer you any, Mr. Richardson!" she cried. "I never thought of it."

"Didn't offer him a cigarette!" cried Nick. "Why, he smokes like a chimney."

Aghast, the hostess stole a glance at the visitor's face. Mr. Richardson seemed to be bearing up well under this exaggeration; it did not appear to cause him the least disquietude. He cast a selective glance over the contents of the box that Nick was holding out to him, and, after due deliberation, made his choice.

His hostess, on the sofa, forgot to sit up straight; the relaxed attitude threw her figure into graceful lines. "Even if a pause should come, she thought, it would not be fatal. Which

was a long step in advance for Mrs. Nick. There was no dressing that night for dinner; afternoon slipped into evening of itself; the hour grew late, and no one was aware of it.

When at last good-bys were said, the three had traveled far on the road that leads to intimacy. The night was so fine that Mr. Richardson decided to walk back to the club. The wind had dropped, and the sky was bursting with stars. He walked with a swinging gait, humming under his breath a sprightly air that had not occurred to him for years.

His thoughts lingered with the pair he had just left, and, in humble mood, he wondered at the injustice he had nearly done a sweet and gracious woman. For the first time he was aware of the danger of the morbidly sensitive attitude of mind he had suffered himself to fall into of late. It had begun to obscure his judgment. Only this afternoon he had indulged in all sorts of foolish fancies, actually believing that his hostess regarded him as an antiquated specimen of the human race, good for nothing but consignment to the ranks of the pitiful company of seniles. Now he knew better. She had been shy at first—what he had taken for a stiff formality had been but a natural shyness that had soon worn off. How glad he was that Nick had brought him back to realize his mistake while there was yet time to remedy it!

From now on he was going to take himself in hand, spend fewer hours alone, mix with his fellows. What, after all, mattered a few years more or less? A man was only as old as he felt. Away the specter! It befooled him to keep his breadth of outlook and his sanity of spirit for the sake of his young friends.

These were at the moment on their way to their bedroom, going upstairs like two children, hand in hand.

"That's just the sort of evening I like," said Nick. "I wish we had more of 'em. There's nothing in this formal dining out. You never get to know anybody!"

His wife made no answer. There is not much time for speech when you are revising your whole theory of life. Ever since she had been able to think at all, she had ruled all her actions by conventional standards. She had not only done this stupid thing herself, but she had endeavored to impose her ideas upon Nick. She had wished to kill his spontaneity; crush the expression of impulses that came hot from the fire of a generous heart. She had dared to attempt this cold-blooded murder!

She had not succeeded, thank God! She had failed in the accomplishment

of her purpose because Nick was stronger than she. It was he who had unwittingly saved Mr. Richardson out of her hands; saved him from the disastrous consequences of her stubborn, her presumptuous, bungling. Where she had offered stones, he had given bread.

They were in their room now, and Nick was pulling off his coat.

"Well, what do you think of our friend, on the whole, Gwenny?" he asked, flinging the garment across a chair.

To his astonishment, she turned toward him, with her arms open wide and her eyes shining with tears.

"Oh, Nick!" she whispered, her face hidden on his shoulder. "I think he's such a 'good old cock'!"



THE DEAD PEACE

HURLED from our world awry,
A world of reason fled,
The white Peace rides the sky,
A moon all cold and dead.
We think she has not sped
Beyond our childish grasp,
And by our yearning led
We stretch vain hands to clasp.

We see her shine on high;
Far beams on us are shed;
But, even while we cry,
The hands we stretch are red.
For her our hosts have bled,
Now rolls war's crimson flood;
The dead Peace overhead
Still draws the tides of blood.

MCLANDBURGH WILSON.



The Death Listener

BY

Alicia Ramsey

THE first time I saw the death listener was on a chill spring evening toward the end of March, in a little village in Brittany.

The wind was moaning in the bare trees; the sea was sobbing on the distant beach; the light was fading over the desolate sand dunes; the cracked bell in the little church on the hill was tolling for vespers. The gray sea birds' mournful crying, as they circled in the gray sky above me, recalled to me the fantastic belief that they were the embodied souls of the unforgotten dead.

I was walking along the desolate roadway when a queerly shaped cross caught my eye. I stopped to look over the low wall of the old churchyard and saw a woman lying on the damp ground beside a grave. So still she lay that for a moment I thought she must be dead. I was, indeed, just turning away to go for assistance, when slowly and painfully she raised herself to her knees and I saw her face.

It was a wonderful face—deeply spiritual, thin to emaciation, pitifully frail, and bleached to an unearthly pallor, like the faces of the dead, yet informed with a strange vigor. Her white hair, softly banded under her white, frilled cap, stood out like an aureole around that blanched oval, in which her dark eyes burned like flames. It was a terrible face, yet it was beau-

tiful. All the artist rose up in me at the sight.

I stood stock-still and stared at her, and she stared back at me. Then, without a sound, she fell forward and crouched back again on the grave.

Fearful of intruding on such grief, I hesitated to speak to her, yet I could not bring myself to go my way and leave her lying there in that desolate place alone. To my relief, in the midst of my perplexity a young woman came around the corner with a basket of apples on her arm.

Though an Englishman born and bred, my father's business relations had taken him to France. As a child, French had been to me as my mother tongue. I crossed the road, and, hailing her, I told her what I had seen.

"Ei, who may that be, now?" said she to herself. "The good God has been taking holiday of late round about here. I know of none whose sorrow is fresh enough for tears."

Setting her basket of apples down in the road, she ran up the little, grassy incline and looked over the churchyard wall. In another moment she returned to me, her fresh, round face placid and unconcerned.

"It is nothing, m'sieu'. It is only La Compere Lisette, the death listener."

I stared at her, thinking my French must be at fault, after the lapse of so many years.

"The death listener?"

"She who listens to the dead, m'sieu!"

Seeing I was still at a loss, she explained.

"We are simple folk, we Bretons, as without doubt m'sieu' knows, but we have our affairs like the others—affairs of the body, the heart, the head—and for these things we take counsel of the dead; the dead who are always with us, listening, watching, waiting—" She cast a look backward over her shoulder at the churchyard and crossed herself hastily. "It is well that they who are with the good God should tell us what to do, and it is well for us who hear them to take their advice. But what will you, m'sieu'? We are poor folks in this sad country. The sea is a hard mistress and leaves us but little time. Thus it is La Compere Lisette who listens to the dead ones for us and tells us what they say."

It sounds crude enough on paper, but spoken in that singsong dialect, under the gray sky by the old churchyard, to the moaning of the sea, I accepted it as one accepts everything in Brittany, that land of mysticism and romance. I thrilled to the telling as I had thrilled to the fairy tales of my Breton nurse in her frilled cap and gold earrings as we had sat together by the crackling wood fire in my old nursery in my boyhood days.

"*The death listener.*" The words seized on my fancy and held it. What a title for a picture! What a picture one might paint if one's inspiration were but commensurate with the beauty and the mystery of that surpassing face! Why shouldn't I be the man to paint it?

Why not, indeed? There was nothing to hinder me. I was my own master. On the instant I made up my mind to stay.

It was an easy matter to find rooms; the artist flood had not yet set in. I

wired to Paris for my luggage and my canvases to be sent after me and settled down in the picturesque old inn as if I'd lived there for years.

Over my omelet and salad, I told the landlord my object in staying and asked him to send around and arrange the sittings for me, to begin the next day. When, however, he heard whom I wanted as my model, he shook his head.

"That is to ask the impossible, m'sieu'. La Compere Lisette will not consent to sit. Many of those gentlemen of m'sieu's distinguished calling have requested her with prolonged importunity, but her answer has always been the same."

I was quite taken aback. As with most artists, the mere suggestion of my wish being thwarted inflamed my desire. The fever of my first inception had already begun to take hold of me. Paint that face I must and would.

"I'll pay her anything she likes to ask within reason," I exclaimed. "A hundred francs; two hundred; if necessary, five hundred! Surely she won't refuse such a sum as that?"

Again the landlord shrugged his shoulders. "Who knows, m'sieu'?"

"But, man alive," I cried, "how can she afford to refuse?"

"She is old, La Compere Lisette, m'sieu', and wants but little. There are none to follow after her when she is gone."

"Has she, then, no one belonging to her?"

The landlord shook his head. "None, m'sieu'. Five sons and a good husband were hers; brave boys, their heads reaching to those rafters"—he pointed dramatically upward—"and as handsome as the day. But Madame Sea does not believe in too much happiness for her children, so one night she took them all away!"

"You don't mean they were all drowned at the same time?"

"But certainly, m'sieu'. La Compere Lisette knew how it would be with them if they went, but they would not listen to her. So they died."

I looked at him curiously. "What do you mean, she knew how it would be?"

"The dead told her, m'sieu'."

For a moment I stood silently watching the fire crackling and flaming on the hearth, pondering on the strangeness of life. Then the thought of my picture came back to me, hot and strong.

"However little she wants, she must live. She won't be able to go on listening to the dead, as you call it, much longer. She'll be too old."

The landlord looked at me almost pityingly. "The older they get, m'sieu', the better they hear. It is always thus with those who listen to the dead."

I took a sudden resolution. "Where does she live?"

"About twenty minutes' walk from here. M'sieu' cannot miss it. It is straight along the shore."

I threw my cigarette into the fire. "I will go to her to-night."

"If it pleases m'sieu'." Like all Bretons, he was too well used to the erratic ways of artist folk to be surprised at anything they might choose to do.

"I suppose she won't be gone to bed, will she?"

He smiled. "The death listeners are never bed seekers, m'sieu'. The dead speak loudest at night."

As he spoke, the wind moaned in the big chimney, the rain came dashing on the pane. I found myself shuddering as if I had suddenly taken cold.

The fire and the cheery warmth and the bright lights all tempted me to a glass of wine and quiet gossip over a pipe, but I would not give in to them. I pulled my resolution together and got up. I would not sleep until I had seen her and settled the matter to my own satisfaction and hers.

I took out my pocketbook and gave him a ten-pound note. "Change this for me before I go, will you?"

He took out his keys and opened his till. "The gold does not burden m'sieu'? I have no notes left."

"All the better." I dropped the money into my pocket and took down my coat and hat.

As I have said, it was quite a small village. At the outside, it did not contain more than a matter of three or four hundred souls. As is usually the case in such little seafaring communities, most of the buildings were huddled together; but toward the outskirts it straggled considerably, and one or two isolated houses were built at some distance along the shore. La Compere Lisette's was one of these. Her little cottage stood back apart from the rest, with the sea in front and the churchyard at the back—a very fitting habitation for one whose whole life had been swept away by the sea, and whose life-work was to listen to the dead. The suitability of the environment enchanted me as I stumbled along the sands in the pitch darkness by the side of the raging sea. As I left the lights of the village behind me, I had nothing but the luminous wave line to guide me. But for the little lamp burning in her window, I doubt if I should have found my way.

I knocked and entered almost simultaneously, for a gust of wind that seemed to shake the cottage to its foundations literally blew me in at the door.

The little place, poverty-stricken though it was, was spotless. As the saying goes, one could have eaten off the floor. There was hardly any furniture to speak of, except a small, round table and a couple of wooden chairs. There was no curtain to the window, and—what was still more noticeable in a Breton household—no gayly striped counterpane on the walled-in bed. Though the night was bitterly cold,

there was neither charcoal in the brazier nor fire on the hearth.

When I entered, La Compere Lisette was at her supper. She sat in her high-backed chair, eating her frugal meal. Beside her lay her Bible, with her spectacles in it to keep it open at the place where she read. A piece of dry bread lay on the plate before her. There was nothing more comforting than cold water in her cup. Small wonder, thought I, that her face was so white and frail on such Spartan fare.

She made no effort to rise and welcome me, nor did she express any surprise at seeing a stranger so late on such a night. She just sat still and looked at me, and, as in the churchyard a few hours before, I stood still and looked back at her. In the silence I found my hand unconsciously groping after my hat.

More like a suppliant asking a favor than a rich man conferring one, I made known my request.

As the landlord had foretold, she refused me point-blank.

"It is impossible, m'sieu'!"

"But you *must!*" I cried. "Look you, I am a rich man and a fairly well-known artist. If the picture is good, your fame will go all over the world."

"The world is nothing to me, m'sieu'."

"But my painting is everything to me. Come, be reasonable. Give me the sittings I want and I will give you anything in reason that you ask."

"I ask nothing, m'sieu'!"

"But you want much." Involuntarily, I glanced at the bare room and the meager meal. "Good soup, a glass of good wine, a good fire on the hearth."

"M'sieu' mistakes; I have all I require."

I stamped my foot with vexation. "Everybody requires money. I will give you ten francs every time you sit to me."

She shook her head.

"Fifteen, then; twenty."

She looked at me. "It is impossible, m'sieu'!"

"Why impossible?"

A look almost superhuman in its uplifted spirituality came into her white face. "I have promised the dead."

"What have the dead got to do with it? If they were here, they'd give you your promise back quick enough. Come, now, I'll give you thirty francs every time you sit to me."

In the flickering light, I saw her lips tremble. Acting on an impulse that I could not myself account for, I thrust my hand into my coat pocket and brought it out full of gold pieces.

"Doesn't that tempt you?" I cried. Her face changed as I threw it on the table. "Sit to me and it's yours."

She got up out of her chair as if a power stronger than herself was dragging her out of it. "I promised the dead," she said.

"Well, now you're going to promise the living. Come, promise *me!*" In my eagerness, I leaned too far forward. The rickety little table tilted up and the money rolled toward one side. We both instinctively put out our hands to stop it, and her fingers came in contact with mine. They struck a chill right through me. It was like touching the hands of the dead. So sharply did I withdraw myself from that contact that the table lurched clean over, and the gold rolled hither and thither on the floor.

With a cry, she dropped on her knees, groping, clutching, gathering up the pieces one by one. As I held the lamp above her, its shifting light fell on her face, and I noticed that all the spirituality had gone out of it. Her eyes looked like the eyes of a hungry wolf that suddenly sees its prey.

"How many pieces are there, m'sieu'?"

"I'm not sure; fifteen, I think." I

was not thinking of the money. I was thinking of her. I had found my picture. Just so would I paint her, kneeling on the bare floor, with the bread and water and the Bible on the table and the lamp in her hand, searching for the gold.

"I can only find fourteen, m'sieu'."

"It doesn't matter. Don't bother about it now. Come, let me help you to your feet."

I raised her up. Once again that unreasoning shudder ran through me as I touched her hands. Once again we stood and looked at each other. She put the gold down on the table. It lay in a little, glittering pile between her and the lamp.

"Well, will you sit to me?"

She said nothing.

"Come," I said roughly. "I can't stay here all night. Make up your mind. Is it yes or no?" I made as if to pick up the money.

With a sudden movement, she thrust herself forward. I could see the naked passions raging in her face.

"Wait, monsieur!"

The anguish in her eyes would have moved the heart of a stone.

I seized my advantage and pressed it home. "You *will* sit to me?"

She threw out her hands with a gesture of despair. "If m'sieu' *wills* it."

I could have shouted aloud for pure joy.

"Beginning to-morrow? For as long as I choose? At twenty-five francs a sitting? Is it agreed?"

She bowed her head.

"It is well." I pointed to the money. "I'll leave that for the first five sittings." I pushed it toward her. Her hand closed upon it. She stood looking at me, speaking no word.

"You have done well," I said to her.

She gave me a look that startled me. I would have given all I possessed to have transfigured it in paint. "Evil will come of it, m'sieu'."

I laughed loudly. "Let it!"

In the silence that followed, I could hear the wind crying like a soul in pain.

With that, I left her. But I did not go far. Impelled by a devouring curiosity, I stole back like a thief in the night and peeped through the curtainless window. She was still standing at the table, her head bent as if she were listening intently.

As I went forward into the tumultuous darkness, I wondered if she was listening to the voice of the dead or to the voice of the gold.

Next morning I started my picture.

I swallowed a cup of coffee, retrieved an old easel and a canvas from the attic of my friend, the landlord, and was at work well before nine.

"I'm going to paint you just as you stood last night," I told her; "with the bread and water and the Bible on the table just as you had them. I want the candle in the window and the lamp on the table. Will you get those things ready while I get out my paints?"

Before I had got out my brushes, the things were all there.

"I shall want the gold on the table as well, please."

She looked at me, setting her lips in a straight, hard line. "The gold is mine, m'sieu'."

I laughed. "I'm not asking you to give it back to me, am I? It won't hurt it to let it lie on the table while I'm working, I suppose? To-morrow I'll bring my own."

"M'sieu' gave it to *me*."

"*Bon Dieu!*" I exclaimed impatiently. "Who denies it? Do you suppose I want to steal it? Come, don't let us waste this beautiful light. Get it, quick!"

She remained standing, her dark eyes fixed on me. "It is impossible, m'sieu'."

"Why? You've got it, haven't you?"

She shook her head.

"Not got it?" I exclaimed. "Why, you haven't eaten it, have you? What have you done with it?"

"I have given it to the dead."

I could not have felt more confounded if she had struck me in the face. I lost myself in abject apologies, which she received in perfect silence. Utterly disconcerted, I fell to my work.

On my way home I met the village priest. With that exquisite courtesy that seems a natural inheritance of the sons of Rome, he introduced himself to me, and, to my surprise, spoke with considerable acumen of a picture of mine that had made some little stir a few years before in the world of art.

"You know my work, father?"

"We are all artists in Brittany, my son." He looked at me with a roguish smile. "There's a little angel that sadly wants a new pair of wings when you've time to spend an hour in my little church."

"Gladly, father, when I've finished the picture I'm doing now."

"What picture is that, my son?"

"I'm going to paint La Compere Lisette."

He looked at me as if I had taken leave of my senses. "But that is impossible! La Compere Lisette will never consent."

"She has consented already, father."

"Consented!"

"I come from her first sitting."

The priest stood still and faced me. His fine old face was very stern. "That was not well done, my son."

"Where's the harm?"

"No harm for others, my son. With her it is otherwise. She has pledged herself to sit to no artist."

"She has changed her mind. It's a woman's privilege."

"But not *her* privilege, my son. *She has promised the dead.*"

I was suddenly panic-stricken lest he should intervene between me and my heart's desire. "I'm sorry, father, but

she must stick to her bargain. I've paid her already."

"Then she must give back the money."

"She can't. She's spent it."

"Spent it! To whom has she given it?"

"To the dead."

At my words, the anger died out of the old priest's face, and a look of the tenderest pity crept into his eyes.

"She is a saint," he said.

I thought of her face as the lamp had shone on it, and I wondered if she was.

Over my breakfast, I asked the landlord to explain what the priest had said. "Whom did she promise not to sit for her picture?"

"Her husband, m'sieu'."

"Why?"

"*Ma foi*, m'sieu'! In those days she was beautiful, La Compere Lisette, and he was jealous. Moreover, there was another woman"—he paused in his dramatic way—"not beautiful, but with a great *dot*, who also desired him as a husband."

"So La Compere Lisette, like a wise woman, pacified his jealousy and married him," I replied, laughing.

"Even so, m'sieu'. It was a great wedding. Five casks of cider and a hundred fowls! Half Brittany came to it! Beautiful as the sun was La Compere on that day of her happiness, with the white veil the English lady had given her and the crown of roses in her hair."

"And the other woman?" I asked idly. "What of her?"

"Eh, *Bon Dieu*, m'sieu'! She took herself and her money bags to another village."

"And married another man?"

"Ah, m'sieu', it is easy for the rich to buy a husband, but the good God was not pleased with her and she bore no sons."

The phrase struck on my ears de-

lightfully. "Why was the good God not pleased with her?" I asked.

"Her heart was as hard as her gold, m'sieu'. On the day when the great storm took those six brave ones, she danced on the shore, rejoicing, and threw a crown of roses to Madame Sea."

"She was jealous, too, it would seem."

He shrugged his shoulders. "What will you, m'sieu'! These little affairs of the heart do not always arrange themselves as one might wish. All pass the same way when youth burns in the blood, as without doubt m'sieu' also knows." He put the dish of stewed pears and a brioche before me and hurried away.

The scrap of information, meager though it was, added just the necessary touch of personal piquancy to the subject that already engrossed my thoughts to the exclusion of everything else. I returned with renewed zest to my work.

As the days passed, the psychologist who is hidden in every artist awoke in me, and I became obsessed with a desire to know more of my model's strange calling. I thought of the tales she could tell; the mysteries she could unfold; perhaps—who knows?—the crimes she could reveal. The secrets of the living are wonderful enough in all conscience; what, then, must be the secrets of the dead?

At first, in the intervals of my work, I tried to make her talk to me, but it was useless. Even in answer to a direct question, she would sometimes make no reply.

Once, and once only, do I recall anything like conversation passing between us. It was on the day of the third sitting. I spoke of her hands.

"You've no right to those hands," I said to her.

"They are mine, m'sieu',"

"But they don't belong to you. With

such hands, you ought to be a rich woman."

"I am poor, m'sieu'; very, very poor."

"That's why I say they don't belong to you. Those hands are the hands of possession. They were made to acquire, to gather together—to hold."

She looked at me with an extraordinary penetration. "They hold the secrets of the dead."

"Well," I exclaimed, half in jest, half in earnest, "you'll have to cut them off or hide them. I shall never be able to paint them."

She hid them under her apron. No words can describe the impression the simple action made on me. It was so sly.

"Will m'sieu' have it thus?"

"No, no!" I cried. "That would destroy the spirit of my picture. Besides, I can't dispense with an inch of you. Your hands are as wonderful as your face." I looked round the room absently and my eye lighted on the Bible lying on the table. It was an immense volume, with stiff, black covers and great brass clasps. From the look of it and the size of it, it must have been at least several hundred years old. It was open as usual, with her spectacles in it to mark the place of her reading.

I had a sudden inspiration. "I'll change the composition of the foreground," I said, speaking my thoughts aloud, as my habit was when excited by my work. "That Bible will break the line of color exactly. Try laying your right hand on it." I was taking a step forward when she sprang up like a tigress.

"Rather would I prefer to render back to m'sieu' his money than that he should paint the Holy Book."

So shaken was she with passion that it took me the best part of an hour to pacify her into a continuance of the sitting.

It was not until I was laying my head

on my pillow that night that the thought come to me: Where would she have found the money to repay me if I had taken her at her word?

That same afternoon on my way home I met a woman. She was a stranger to me, but I saw at a glance that she was a Breton, for she was in full gala native costume. The lace on her silk apron must have been priceless. An ornament, jeweled with great, green stones that looked like emeralds, flashed on her flat breast. The great, gold pins on her elaborately frilled cap glittered in the setting sun. Though far from comely—with an eye like a stone and the mouth of a shrew—she looked strangely picturesque. We eyed each other curiously in passing, as is the way with people who inhabit the small places of the earth.

Intuition is a strange thing! It came to me in a flash that she was the "other woman" who had danced on the shore and thrown roses into the sea to celebrate the death of her rival's husband and sons.

At dinner, that night, the landlord was full of the news.

"Figure to yourself, m'sieu', that bad one she returns to the village! Her man is dead—the blessed saints protect him!—and small wonder! With such a tongue, his poor heart must have been pierced with holes! Back comes our fine lady, to break our hearts of envy, with five white cows, a hundred fat hens, and a barrel full of gold pieces, to live in the white house with the green shutters which is so admired of m'sieu' at the top of the hill! *Parbleu!* M'sieu' should have seen her! A brooch as big as a soup plate full of green stones as big as peas—emeralds she calls them—and a lace apron finer than the blessed mother's at the Pardon! And a gold snake crawling up her arm! And she a new-made widow! Pity the snake can not bite her with its gold teeth, say I! Evil will come of it, as m'sieu' will be

prepared to testify. There will be trouble upon trouble in the village, now she has come." He went his way, wagging his great head at the prospect.

For my part, I was enchanted. My imagination was stimulated to cracking point; my head a kaleidoscope of color. I went to my walled-in bed with my brain on fire.

Oddly enough, by one of those queer coincidences life is so fond of, next day there was an accident on the shore.

A boat owner, mending his rigging, lost his balance, fell, struck his head on an iron stanchion, and was killed on the spot. He had been a bad husband and a worse father, but he was the bread-winner, and there were four hungry little mouths to fill. He lay on the shining sands, and his widow and orphans knelt by his side, rending the heavens with their cries.

It was not only his death they were bewailing. The real tragedy lay in the fact that the dead man had hidden his savings in some secret hiding place unknown to any one but himself. He had died and taken his secret with him. No one knew where the money was.

Suddenly one of the sympathizers be-thought her of the death listener. "Fetch her and promise her one of the gold pieces!" cried she. "She will listen for thee, and thy man will tell her where to find the gold!"

"Aye, aye!" cried the crowd. "Fetch the death listener! Fetch La Compere Lisette!"

There was, however, no need to fetch her. As if the wild winds had carried the tidings to her lonely cottage, at that moment she came walking slowly along the shore.

The widow ran to her, crying to her for help.

"Thou hast known sorrow thyself, O death listener. But what is thy sorrow to my sorrow! I have four little ones to feed. Listen to the dead and let them tell thee where is the secret hid-

ing place, and I will give thee two gold pieces if I find the gold."

Silently the death listener knelt down on the sand. She opened the dead man's shirt and laid her hand on his naked chest.

A strange hush fell on us. Even the dead man's widow and her children ceased their lamenting. There was not a sound but the sobbing of the sea and the crying of the birds.

She knelt there with her head bent as if she were listening intently. Then she looked at the widow and spoke to her: "The gold is in an earthen pot of honey hidden under the old beehive."

The words were hardly out of her mouth before the widow was on her feet and running toward the house, with half the village streaming at her heels.

The death listener rose slowly to her feet. As she did so, the other woman, who had been watching the scene with mocking eyes, detached herself from the little group of admirers and flatterers that surrounded her and came forward. She was wrapped in a silk shawl with many fringes and embroidered with parrakeets. The vivid oranges and greens and reds of its coloring blazed in the bright sun.

She took out her purse and extracted a gold piece between her finger and thumb and threw it on the sand.

"Hi, there! Thou wonder one! Beggar that thou art! Listen to my dead for me!"

Instinctively, those of us standing round about drew a step closer. The insult was so flagrant that had La Compere turned and struck her I should not have been surprised.

Instead, she stooped and picked up the money.

She picked it up and she spat on it. The simple action was more terrible to me in its deep significance than if she had cursed the other woman in words.

She stretched out her hand toward

the sea, the gold coin lying on the flat palm. Even so, thought I, must have stood her ancestors, perhaps on that very shore, when they offered an oblation to the gods of death.

She stretched out her hand, and a strange trembling took her. Her eyes darkened in the whitening of her countenance until they looked like pools of ink.

"*Thy man is here.*"

Hardy though the other was, I saw her face change, but she laughed aloud, showing her discolored teeth.

"And what does he bid thee say to me?"

"He bids thee sell thy white cows, thy fat hens, and thy great gold locket, and expend thy substance in masses for his soul."

"A likely thing!" So breathless was the silence that the tinkling of the chains of her gold cap pins as she tossed her head were distinctly audible to us above the murmuring of the sea. "Those things that were my father's and my father's father's before him! What more has he to say?"

"He says he is in torment."

"It is well said! He was a thrifless waster of others' money, but he loved me! He is in torment because he had to leave me behind."

"He says he is in torment because thou wilt be with him to-morrow before the sun goes down."

"Then he lies!" Crimson with rage and fear, she advanced on the death listener. "Even as thy man lied to thee when he left thy arms to come to mine!"

"That did my man *never!* Thou didst paint thy eyes and wait for him at the corners. But he never came."

"Did he not, then? When thou wert abed with thy squawking babies, he wearied of thee and of their crying and came to me for rest."

"My squawking babies were his children, bone of his bone, flesh of his

flesh, born of the blood that burns and the kisses of his mouth. What dost thou know of love, thou barren one, who hast never borne a child?"

It was like a scene out of a Greek tragedy—the blue sea, the wastes of shining sands, the two women caught in the clutch of primeval passion, the dead man lying forgotten at their feet.

In the midst of it, the villagers came rushing back to us. They were shouting and talking excitedly at the tops of their voices. The widow held an earth-ware pot full of gold pieces in her hands.

"Look! We have found it! It was in the honey pot under the old beehive, even as she said. Blessed art thou, O death listener! The dead are with thee and tell thee what is and what is to be." She held out the two gold pieces, and they crowded round, acclaiming her.

But the death listener said nothing.

She looked across the dead man's body at the other woman, and she smiled.

The next day, for the first time since the sittings began, the work did not go well. I was painting like a soul in torment, when the door was flung open and a woman rushed in.

"Murder!" she screamed. "Murder! Jeane Caron lies stabbed to the heart in her bed! The cider runs down the hill; the white cows lie dead in the cowshed with their throats cut; the fat hens have flown to the devil; and all her jewels have gone! Come quickly! Quickly!" She ran screaming out of the door. It was as if a whirlwind had entered, done its dread work, and vanished.

I turned and looked at La Compere Lisette. She had not stirred. Immovable, speechless, she sat in her high-backed chair, her dark eyes glittering like diamonds.

I thought of her words the day before, and my blood ran cold.

Such news spreads fast in a small community. It could not have been more than a few minutes before a crowd came running along the shore and surged into the little room. The old priest, clutching his crucifix, and the little, fat mayor, red-faced and panting, were at their head.

The people, however, did not wait for their spokesman. They spoke for themselves.

"Death listener!" they shouted. "Death listener! Come thou with us and let the dead tell thee who is the murderer!" They did not wait for her to consent or to deny them. They lifted her bodily out of her chair and carried her away.

In the white house on the top of the hill, there was a strange silence. The flower beds were all trampled down, and the bright spring flowers all lay dying, torn up by their roots. As we opened the little, green gate, a white hen, distractedly clucking, rushed out from the cowshed and ran right across our path. Her white feathers were all bedraggled and stained bright red.

Like a herald of terror, she flew screaming into the bushes. The fantastic thought came to me she was telling us who the murderer was.

Upstairs in the best bedroom lay the dead. The room was crowded to suffocation, but they made way for the mayor, and I followed on his footsteps into the room. The green shutters were open and the gay sunshine came streaming in.

The room was in a frightful confusion. The chairs were overthrown; the sheets were all crumpled; the glass and the washbasin were smashed to atoms. In one corner lay the silk shawl, a heap of colored rags; in another lay the silk apron, the beautiful lace on it torn into shreds. It looked as if a madman had raged through the room.

In the great white bed with the frilled pillows lay the other woman.

Her dyed hair was disheveled; her face was distorted; her eyes—transfixed with terror—were wide open. On her arm there was a bruise where the gold snake had been.

I thought of the landlord's wish that it might bite her.

Well, his wish had been fulfilled.

By her side stood the death listener, not listening, but talking to the dead.

Her voice, hardly raised above a whisper, was yet of so penetrating a quality that we could distinguish every word.

"Ei! Ei! Thou didst bid me to thy new, grand house, Jeane Caron. Well, I have done thy bidding. I have come. Where are thy white cows? Thy fat hens? Thy great jewel with the green-glass stones, thou didst boast to me of? Why dost thou not rise up and show them to me? I am here!"

She paused as if waiting for her question to be answered. Then she began to speak again:

"Shall I tell thee what I have seen? Thy white cows are dead in the cowshed. Thy fat hens are dead in the farmyard. Thy lace apron and the shawl with the parrakeets and the colored fringes, which thou didst inherit from the Spaniard, thy great grandmother, lie in shreds in the corner. Thy gold locket, thy gold cap pins, and thy gold snake are gone. And thyself—thou barren one, with no sons to mourn thee—liest dead in thy fine new bed!"

The old priest ran forward with uplifted crucifix, and seized her by the arm. "Cease, my daughter! Thou art not here to upbraid the living, but to hold communion with the dead."

With a magnificent gesture she thrust him from her.

He fell back, quailing before the passion in her eyes. She turned back to the bed.

"I, the death listener, can hear thy dead voice better than thy viper's tongue

when thou wert alive. Speak to me, thou enticer of other women's husbands, and tell me, if thou dost dare, who thy murderer is."

She stooped down and laid her head to the dead woman's mouth.

She bent down lower and lower until her face was on a level with the bed. Suddenly she struck the dead woman on the mouth. "Thou liar! Now shall we see which one of us two he loves!" She flung up her arms and pitched face forward onto the dead.

Every soul in the room fell to his knees, smitten with terror.

I, too—the skeptic and unbeliever—fell on my knees and prayed.

The night before she was to be buried, I fell a prey to sleeplessness. Turn and twist as I would, I could not find rest.

At last I could bear it no longer. I got up, put on my things, opened the door, and went out. A great calm lay over the sea and shore. The moon was at the full.

For quite a long time I must have stood outside looking in at the window. Then a great desire fell on me to look once again on that face of mystery, and I opened the door and went in.

For a long time I stood there looking down at her. Then, for what reason I shall never know, I turned on my heel and walked to the table and sat down in her high-backed chair. Her Bible lay before me.

Suddenly it came to me that I would like to have that Bible for my own. The days that I had spent in her company were unforgettable; they had left a mark on me that could never be effaced as long as I lived; that part of me that lay in my picture seemed in some strange way to belong to her.

Skeptic though I was, for the sake of those days I wanted that Bible. I promised myself that I would take it to the old priest before leaving for Paris

and obtain his consent. With that intent, I put out my hand and lifted it. In my surprise I nearly dropped it. It was as heavy as lead.

Before I realized what I was doing, I had turned the pages. A few leaves only fluttered through my fingers. The rest of the book was wood.

Overcome with curiosity, I took out my matches and lit the little lamp. Instantly the mystery was solved.

It was not a Bible at all.

The front part of the book was of paper; the back was a kind of box; evidently a secret hiding place.

I wondered what secret a woman who had kept so many secrets of other people had had to hide of her own.

Without thinking what I was doing, I ran my fingers down the edge of the box. The spring was so simple it wouldn't have deceived a child. It flew open almost as I touched it. Inside was a receptacle packed with gold.

The lamp shone on it as it had shone on my gold the night I had paid her.

I looked across to where she lay and I smiled.

So this, then, was the secret of the death listener! This, the passion that had informed her miser hands and lain behind those eyes of a hungry wolf! I was glad I had been the one to find it. I would take it to the priest the first thing next morning, and the secret should be buried between him and me.

"Or would you like it buried with you?" The thought was so acute that I spoke the words aloud. I got up and went back to the bed and looked again at the motionless figure. It was almost as if she were pleading with me to carry out her request.

Impatient with myself, I went back to the table, put down the lamp, and lifted the Bible to take it away. As I did so, I must have leaned unconsciously on the table. The rickety little thing lurched over as it had lurched

when I had leaned on it before. The gold in the make-believe Bible shifted.

Beneath it lay an ornament set with large green stones, two gold cap pins, and a gold snake with emerald eyes. Beside them lay a small white handkerchief soaked in blood.

Dumbfounded, I stood and stared at them.

My heart beat as if it would burst. My ears began to sing. The perspiration poured down my face like rain.

In God's name, what was I to do?

I stood there with the dead, and gradually, in the silence, strange thoughts came into my head.

"She stole my man. She put the evil eye on my happiness. She threw roses to Madame Sea when she took away my sons. I have fasted while she has feasted. I have wept while she has laughed. I have prayed while she has sinned. I have lain on the damp earth while she has slept in her man's arms in her warm bed. I was young and beautiful, and I have had nothing. She was old and ugly, and she has had all. Is it not enough punishment? I did what I could for you. Do what you can for me."

It was like a voice speaking to me, telling me what to do.

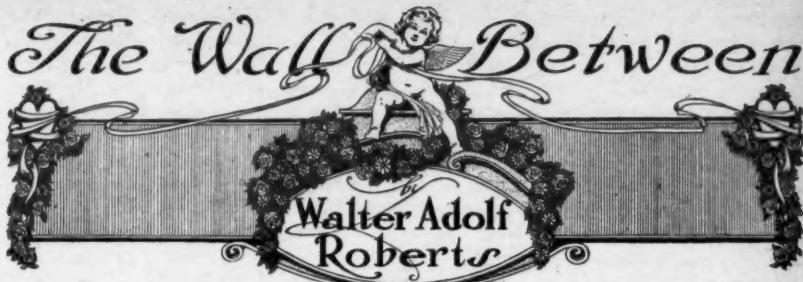
I took all the things out of the box, and I wrapped them in the handkerchief one by one. I went out into the night. I ran a boat softly down to the edge of the shore. I rowed out down the golden pathway into the dark waters that lay beyond.

The stars shut their eyes and the moon hid her face while I did what I had to do.

I took out the little handkerchief, and I knotted the four corners together, and I weighted them with a large white stone. The gold snake watched me with its cunning emerald eyes.

In the dark silence I gave them into the keeping of Madame Sea.

The Wall Between



ALL through the afternoon snowflakes had lisped against the windowpanes, and now the early twilight had invaded the room. It crouched in the corners like a living presence and closed murkily about Jim Bradley as he sat in the armchair by the window. The photographs ranged upon the bureau, the landlady's gaudy chromos, his clothes on hooks behind the door—all were vague ghosts of things. Only the round mirror opposite kept its individuality. It seemed abnormally prominent. It focused every ray of available light and shone like an immense eye in the steel-gray gloom.

"Old man," he muttered jerkily to himself, "this cold-storage plant *is* getting on your nerves!"

He jumped to his feet and lighted the gas. The yellow flare merely emphasized the dreariness of the room. It was one of those top-floor affairs that in the more prosperous days of the brownstone house had been part of the servants' quarters. Flimsy wooden partitions provided for three such rooms in the front of the house and three in the back. They were absolutely alike, furnished in a spirit of rigid economy and papered cheaply in flowered designs.

Bradley moved his head impatiently. "I know what's the matter with me," he said. "I haven't got used to the New York way of living in your shell

until you happen to meet some one to steer you right. I want a neighbor who'll invite me to sit in his back parlor. I want a girl to call on."

He roved the room, goaded by a swift spasm of homesickness. "I've been in this town for two weeks without getting to know a human soul," he muttered. "But I've had enough of it. I'm going to introduce myself to the first nice girl I see."

He had stopped before his gallery of photographs. Perhaps one of the pictured faces of his old sweethearts smiled mockingly and gave him the dare. Or perhaps, never having heard the dictum of the sophisticated that romance cannot be found for the seeking, it seemed to him that his problem had simplified itself as if by magic. With a short, buoyant laugh, he reached for his overcoat.

In the side street the snow was coming down in a white swarm of swiftly dancing flakes. They banked in the rim of Bradley's derby hat and about the sleeves and collar of his coat; but he shook himself like a terrier just out of the water and plowed on to the avenue. The street lamps had already been lit, and their yellow globes were so many cheery beacons through the storm. The piano in a moving-picture theater across the way thrummed brassily. The gayly lighted windows of cheap restaurants competed for patronage. And on every side there were

people—women on their shopping errands, clerks and factory girls homeward bound, and workmen smoking their pipes, bowls downward, as they trudged through the snow.

Bradley did not know where he was going. He had no plan of action, and this very fact thrilled him with the possibilities of romance. He reached Twenty-third Street and turned eastward toward Madison Square. The drift of the storm was now behind him, and he fairly hurried along, his ears tingling under the playful fingers of the frost, the skirts of his overcoat wrapping themselves around first one leg and then the other.

A dance hall halted him for a moment, but he shook his head, with a smile, and went on. At Sixth Avenue he passed a group of girls. They were scooping up handfuls of loose snow and chattering merrily as they pelted each other. It was impossible, after all, to thrust one's company upon strange girls, he thought a little sadly. He remembered that churches often gave sociables through the week, at which all were welcome, but the idea of a large gathering was distasteful to him. To-night he wanted the companionship of some one woman who would take him at his face value. Where could he turn? How could he break the ice between himself and even one of the millions of women in New York?

In Madison Square he walked rapidly across the naked park, then back by another path to the Madison Avenue and Twenty-third Street corner, where he stood disconsolately. It was seven o'clock, and very dark now. Trolley cars, almost empty, clanged by at intervals. The home-going crowds had ebbed away. Only such as he were abroad.

But Jim Bradley took a quick grip on himself. There was a long evening

ahead, and he decided that the next move would be to have supper.

He bought a newspaper, crossed the street, and entered a restaurant in the basement of an old-fashioned house sandwiched between two skyscrapers. The place was sparsely scattered with diners. In choosing a table near the door, he took no particular notice of the two persons already seated there. He thought they were together, but when the young man opposite finished his meal and went out, Bradley glanced at the girl thus left alone on his side of the table. Certainly she was very pretty, with a sweetly provocative mouth and two red-brown curls drawn far forward above each ear.

"Lonely, like myself," he thought, "or she would not be eating here," and he looked at her so earnestly that he suddenly became alarmed lest she should take him for a masher, and hid in confusion behind his newspaper.

The girl drank her coffee and rose. He could not resist another glance, and as she picked up her hand bag he saw it drop open and a velvet purse fall silently on the chair. But the girl was not aware of the accident. She moved away as Bradley's lips parted to call to her. His hand closed over her property; he hesitated for the fraction of a second, then snapped his jaws together and slipped the purse into his pocket. No one had seen him do it.

He went on calmly with his supper, and was helping himself to a second lump of sugar when the girl came back, all aflutter with anxiety. She dragged her chair out of the way, fumbled among the dishes, and even lifted up the tablecloth in her haphazard search, as if she thought the purse might have crawled into hiding.

Bradley paid no attention to her for a while. Then he forestalled the waiter, who was approaching, and asked diffidently what was the matter.

"My money! Oh, I've lost my

money!" she wailed. "I'm sure my bag was shut tight when I came in here."

She showed Bradley the hand bag, and he frowned sympathetically as he examined it, and helped to search under the table. He went down onto his knees and struck a match. The ground was carefully gone over. It was evident that her purse was not in the neighborhood of the table.

"I guess it's lost," he said apologetically.

"Yes. On the street, perhaps. What shall I do?"

"Was there much in it?"

"Only two dollars, but it was all I had. I can't even pay my bill."

He reached over and took the meal check from her half-resisting fingers.

"I'll pay it," he said masterfully. "Call it a loan, and don't say no, because I shan't leave you in this fix."

He was already marching over to the cashier's desk. He paid her bill and his own, and guided her through the door. She stopped in the whirling snow, her friendly little face flushed with embarrassment.

"You've saved me from being taken for a dead beat," she said whimsically, "and I don't even know your name."

"My name is Jim Bradley," he answered, "and I'm a low-down faker."

"A faker?" she repeated, puzzled.

"Yes, just that. I'm going to make a clean breast of it. I hid your purse. I was that lonely I simply had to start something. I knew that trick would make you come back to the table, and I could talk to you, and help you search, and—and—here's the purse."

"You stole it!" she gasped, her eyes dilated.

"Don't call it that. I'm a rube in New York, I am, and I had to find some one to talk to. I'd give a whole lot to take in Broadway with you, instead of going back to my hole in the wall to mope. But I'll do just what you say. If you tell me to run along

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and be thankful you don't call a cop, I'll go."

"You made me feel in debt to you for my supper," she stormed, wrenching open her purse, to find the correct change and thrusting it upon him.

"I know, I know!" he said contritely. "Oh, gee! I guess I've done the wrong thing. I was crazy to think that stunt would go in New York."

She tossed her head and walked away. But, womanlike, she looked back and could not repress a smile at the sight of Bradley's disconsolate figure, spattered with snowflakes now like a Santa Claus, as he stood stock-still in the storm. He took courage at that, and joined her. They walked side by side without speaking. She kept her face averted. He could not tell whether she had forgiven him.

"Let's turn uptown," he ventured, at the Broadway crossing, and was rewarded with another smile that puckered deliciously her little, tilted nose and the skin about the corners of her eyes.

"You have *nerve!* You ought to get along in the world," was all she said; but the ice was broken between them, and the city, mysterious, beautiful, drew them on.

Bradley trod on a cloud. He told her of the things he meant to do when he had come to grips with New York. He drew from her scraps of information about herself. She had been away from home longer than he, but she, too, had come from a small town, and she lived in a furnished room, alone. They grew very sympathetic over this; he tingled to his finger tips when he took her arm to help her over the crossings.

Near Greeley Square they looked into the windows of a resplendent fruit-and-candy shop. He brushed aside her objections and darted in, to return with a box of bonbons. They munched peppermints and chocolate creams as they drifted north into the district of thea-

ters and hectic cafés, of hotels that blazed with lights at every window like gigantic ocean liners at anchor in the snowstorm.

The girl walked sturdily beside him, but she was shy, and said little until they reached Columbus Circle, where Bradley steered her eagerly across the maze of car tracks to the wide, monumental entrance to Central Park.

"See!" he cried. "There are snow banks in there. It's just like home."

She laughed joyously. "You big kid! I'll run with you, tight skirts and all."

She caught his hand, and they raced down the path. The snow drove in their faces and flew up in clouds about their feet. The dry, keen air was like a draft of wine. They babbled to each other in an exuberance of spirits that took no thought of the hows and whys of their comradeship.

At a turn in the road they stopped, panting. He made a snowball when he thought she was not looking, but before he could throw it, she whirled on him. Wrestling, he let her force him backward into a drift, whence he emerged, white from head to heels, spluttering and happy.

"Spiteful!" he cried, bearing down upon her. "But you'll get yours now."

He caught her about the waist, and in the struggle the red-brown curls above her ears came loose and blew across his face. Their breath, mingling, was like smoke in the cold air. The lips that quivered with her fresh, staccato laughter were near, and he longed to kiss them. But he fought back the wave of desire even as it swept over him. To-night they were children, and he must not spoil their play.

He pushed her lightly into the snow-drift. She came up a little sobered, and he brushed off her skirt.

"You were rough," she told him. "I hurt my ankle that time."

The boy was contrite in an instant,

but she said that the hurt was nothing, and they walked on into the park. Except for their presence, it was deserted, silent. They found it hard to believe that the roaring streets closed in from every quarter on the gaunt, snow-swept trees.

They chatted merrily, but their play was over. Bradley was sure that the girl's ankle was worse than she had pretended, and when she began to limp he felt very guilty, and insisted that he must take her home. Retracing their steps, they came out into Columbus Circle and boarded a downtown car.

She named the street at which they were to get off. "I live in the shabby old block between Seventh and Eighth Avenues," she smiled; "but it's quiet, and rents are low."

"Yes, yes! This is one of the parts of town I have explored," said Bradley shortly. "Seems like a good block."

He had fallen suddenly silent, but he held the girl's arm with a sense of proprietorship, as he helped her alight from the car and almost lifted her across to the sidewalk.

"What is your number?" he asked.
"Two-sixty-two."

"Sixty-two. That should be right here."

They struggled over mounds of trampled snow and had barely reached the steps when she held out her hand with a gesture of finality.

"Good night," she said. "We had a wonderful time, in spite of all."

"We had," he said soberly. "But we won't say good night—not yet. I'm going to help you up the stairs."

She looked at him from under level eyebrows. "That would never do."

"You won't be able to get up alone, not with that ankle. Just try."

The first step drew from her a sharp cry of pain. "Oh, oh! Is it as bad as that? It must be sprained."

"No, not sprained probably; only

twisted a little, because I was a rough, clumsy bear. You'll have to let me take you to the door of your room."

She considered him gravely for a minute or two.

"You're an extraordinary young man," she said at last. "Do you get away with all the outrageous things you propose to strangers?"

"You're no longer a stranger," grinned Bradley, taking her latchkey and helping her to the top of the stoop. "There!" he added, as the door clicked behind them. "We came in together, so it can't matter how much farther up we go."

Very gently, his hand under the elbow of her left arm, he guided her up three flights of stairs. On the last landing she leaned for an instant against the banister with a fluttering intake of her breath.

"Good night," she whispered softly

in the darkness. "Good night, my neighbor with only a wall between."

"You knew?" he gasped, amazed. "You knew I lived here?"

"Uh-huh—in the restaurant—from the very beginning."

"But I—I had never laid eyes on you before."

"I knew that, too," she said demurely. "But it's not my fault that you should have passed my door a dozen times in the last two weeks. If you hadn't been too polite to turn your head, you'd have seen me, Mr. Man."

"It seems to me," remarked Jim Bradley judiciously, "that this would be the correct, New York fairy-tale moment for asking you your name."

"Save something for to-morrow," she mocked, and the rustle of her skirt told him that she was gone. He did not move until the door of the room next to his own had closed softly behind her.



BECAUSE OUR MOTHERS DREAMED

BECAUSE our mothers dreamed we may have hope;

Facing the dawn and pain with lovely eyes,

Seeing the rapture where The Shadow lies—

Because our mothers dreamed we may have hope.

Because our mothers dreamed we may have love;

Casting their hearts at young things everywhere,

Finding such selfless service all their care—

Because our mothers dreamed we may have love.

Because our mothers dreamed we may have God;

Exultingly, creation as their goal,

Molding out flesh from flesh and soul from soul—

Because our mothers dreamed we may have God!

GLAD MADONE.



III.—IN LOCO PARENTIS

EVERY now and then Walter, my husband, gets an idea firmly wedged in his mind, and when he does, no dog with a bone is more retiring, elusive, and generally won't and un-get-at-able than he is.

This time it was over the new car.

I supposed, of course, that when he wasn't busy, he'd drive me around in it, and when he was busy and I wanted to use it, I would drive it myself, but it appeared that on this point I was laboring under a misapprehension. Drive me around in it he would, could, and did; but let me drive it myself he couldn't, wouldn't, and, worst of all, didn't. I tried almost everything, but he simply wouldn't listen to reason. Finally he departed for the city in triumph—somewhat subdued triumph—and I went to find the others, tell them my troubles, and enlist their sympathies.

I find myself minding Walter every little while, and, when I do, it would be hard to tell which of the two of us is the more surprised.

When Claude and Marjorie came back from their honeymoon in the early summer, they had decided to take the cottage next to Gerald and Nancy; and the morning Walter and I had the rather one-sided argument just referred to, Marjorie's sister, Alice, had come

up from New York to spend the rest of the summer with them.

When Marjorie told us she was coming, Gerald rose and addressed the chair.

"I'm against it," he said.

We were surprised.

"You said she was just nineteen?" Gerald went on.

Marjorie nodded.

"I'm against it," he repeated firmly. "She is too young to marry, and if she comes here—" He waved his hand at me in an expressive sort of way and sat down.

I tried to defend myself, but they all talked at me at once and shouted me down. I just mention this to show the kind of gratitude one gets in this world.

After Walter left that morning, I found them all together on Gerald's veranda and told them about it.

"Isn't it absurd?" I finished.

"It is absurd," said Gerald.

I was pleased. "I knew you'd agree with me," I said.

"How do you mean, agree with you?" said he.

"Why, that Walter's attitude was absurd."

"Oh, I see," gravely. "But I think you misunderstood me. I meant it was absurd for you to think of trying to drive the thing."

The others all laughed.

"I could kill you," I said.

"With a glance. You know that," said Gerald, with the most absurd expression of mingled devotion and apprehension on his face.

"I think you're all horrid," I said. I really was a bit disappointed about the car. "I came here for sympathy, and this is the way you treat me. Don't you think they are disgusting to me, Alice?"

Alice is a little bit of a thing, with big blue eyes and dimples and an adorable sort of half lisp. She has, too, one of the sweetest dispositions and one of the levelest little heads I know, and her gravey little manner makes everything she says adorably appealing.

"Yes," she said, "I'm sure, if I were in your place, I should insist upon driving it, if—if I knew how to manage it," she added doubtfully.

The mental picture thus conjured up, of the minute Alice tearing along the road in a huge, snorting, rampageous touring car, was too much for us, and we laughed until we cried.

"Just let me catch you trying to drive one!" said Marjorie, who babies her sister to a degree much resented by Alice.

"It's absurd to suppose," said Alice, with dignity, and lisping more than ever in her effort to impress us with the seriousness of her argument, "it's absurd to suppose that women aren't just as capable of doing things as men are." Which set us all off again.

"Well," said Alice, in an aggrieved tone, "I'll show you some time."

She did, too.

Two days later, Walter went to town again, and in the evening I was sitting on the veranda by myself when I saw him coming up the path with another man, who was carrying a suit case. There had been a certain coolness between us since Walter's refusal to let me drive, and, although I could see him visibly drooping under it, he made no

remarks on the subject; which, of course, was both unexpected and irritating.

I hardened my heart, therefore, and remained monosyllabic; and the sight this evening of Walter bringing some one home to stay, as I supposed, without telling me was the last straw.

It wouldn't have made the slightest difference ordinarily.

Walter came up the steps with the man, and I rose to meet them. He, the man, was big—over six feet—with nice, humorous, gray eyes, and thick, tawny hair. There was a rugged, outdoor air about him that I liked, too.

"This," said Walter, "is—ah—Mr. Channing—Mr. Hollister Channing," he completed the introduction.

"How do you do, Mr. Channing?" said I graciously, and shook hands. However much a viper one's husband may be, one really must be nice to his guests. Mr. Channing was quite good looking, too.

"Mr. Channing," said Walter slowly, and I saw the traces of an odious smile appearing round the corners of his mouth, "Mr. Channing has promised to drive you in the car when I can't be there."

I looked from one to the other in a puzzled way.

"I don't— You mean—" and I stopped.

Walter's grin broadened for a moment and then vanished.

"He has agreed to come and 'chauf' for us," said he gravely.

That was his revenge.

Well, after welcoming the man metaphorically with open arms, I couldn't very well suddenly turn round and dismiss him. Also, a way was shown me. Also, as I have said before, he was *quite* good looking.

"Won't you sit down, Mr. Channing?" said I hospitably and in a conversational tone.

Mr. Channing looked surprised, and

Walter went him one better. His jaw dropped.

I waited a moment to get the full satisfaction out of Walter's nonplused expression. Then:

"Or perhaps you'd rather go and get settled?" I said.

"Yes, I should like to unpack a little —ah—madame," said Mr. Channing.

He and Walter went into the house together, and I sat down on the veranda again to collect my thoughts. I was a bit ashamed of myself for being so horrid to Walter when he must have been planning all the time to get some one to drive me in the car. I sometimes think that Walter is almost too good to be true, anyway.

At dinner that evening he was insufferable.

I made a few pleasant remarks, but Walter kept his head down and hardly answered, so there fell a silence. Finally he looked up.

"My dear Kitty," he said, "I want to speak to you very seriously a moment."

I looked at him in a puzzled way, and waited.

"I don't wish to criticize," he went on, "but I should like to take the liberty of suggesting that the place for a chauffeur is *not* shaking hands and conversing, tête-à-tête, on the front porch with the wife of the gentleman who is paying his wages. This, of course, is merely a suggestion," he finished. Then he roared.

"Walter," said I, "if you ever dare to play a trick like that on me again, I'll —I'll —"

"Whatever it is, I believe you," said Walter, thus taking another trick.

"I'll ask him to dinner," I finished.

The next day, bright and early, I went out to see Hollister Channing. He was in the garage, going over the car.

When he saw me, he straightened up and said: "Good morning, Mrs. St—ma'am!"

"Good morning!" said I. I couldn't

very well call him Mr. Channing, and yet, by the bright morning light, he looked so obviously a gentleman that I simply couldn't say just "Channing," or, worse, "Hollister."

"I hope you were comfortable last night," I said.

"Yes, thank you," said he, and paused. "I—I noticed that there's a very pleasant room up over this," he ended.

"Yes?" said I. "Would you rather have that?" It's a little bit of a box of a place over the garage, and I had put him in a nice, big room on the third floor of the house, where the other servants' rooms are.

"Well, I don't want to make you any trouble, ma'am"—I thought I saw a faint flicker of humor in his eyes at the "ma'am"—"but if it would be just as convenient, I'd like to be out here. It's—that is—it's nearer the car, you know."

I had the room fixed up for him, but his reason struck me as extraordinarily feeble. Why in the world should he want to be nearer the car? The real reason became clear, later. He wanted to be, not nearer the car, but farther from the servants.

A day or two later we all arranged to go for a ride back into the hills, taking our lunch with us; and, as Walter had gone to town again over some business that had been bothering him, I asked our new chauffeur to take me over to Gerald's to pick up the others.

At ten o'clock the car was drawn up, spick and span, in front of the house, with Mr. Hollister Channing, in full—almost too full—regalia, seated at the wheel. His coat was buttoned up over his chin, his chauffeur's cap was drawn down low on his forehead, and he had on enormous goggles.

Well, he drove me over to Gerald's cottage, and in a few moments Gerald and Nancy, Marjorie, Claude, and Alice were all installed in the tonneau with

the lunch. I sat in the front seat with Channing, and the next moment we were all tearing along the road toward the hills.

I must say the man drove marvelously. The springs of the car were a little stiff then, and the road not particularly good, but although we were going between twenty and twenty-five miles an hour, we all might have been fragile china from the smooth way the car slid along the road, skirting the bumps and depressions.

After three hours or so of riding, we decided to stop for lunch at an inn where they are especially accommodated to luncheon parties.

Channing had brought his own lunch, and elected, evidently, to eat it in the car; for, after taking the things out for us—still in his goggles, by the way—he got back into his seat again.

The inn is some distance back from the road, on the very edge—in fact, half over the edge—of a deep ravine. From its wide veranda, if your table is near the rail, you can see straight down into the bluest, stillest water imaginable, with the clear-cut outlines of the pines on the opposite bank waving the least little bit in some passing breeze that has wandered down there. It's a beautiful place, and I can't imagine why it isn't more frequented. Thank goodness it isn't, though! Enough people know about it and go there, to make it pay, and the old people who own it are pleased enough, they say, not to have it overrun. We were the only visitors there that morning, and the cool, tranquil beauty of it was fascinating.

When we were sitting down, I missed Alice.

"Has any one seen Alice?" I asked.

"She went back to the car to get something or other," said Marjorie. "I couldn't hear what it was."

"I'll go and hunt her up," and I started for the car.

The path from the inn to the road winds through thick woods, and I was quite near the car when I came in sight of it.

When I saw it, I stopped abruptly. Standing by the front wheel were Channing and Alice, the former with his goggles off.

They were facing each other, and in the extended two hands of Channing were reposing the two extended hands of Alice. She had evidently placed them there and forgotten to remove them.

As I came in sight, Channing spoke.

"I couldn't help it, Alice," he said. "But I didn't think you'd recognize me so soon." Alice gave an amused and tolerant laugh. "I couldn't stand not seeing you all summer, and when I told the dad why I wanted to come up here, he stopped my allowance. He doesn't approve of society girls and wouldn't hear of my marrying one. You know what weird ideas they have of New Yorkers out in God's country. Just wait till he sees you! So, as you had told me about these people, and I happened to learn they wanted a chauffeur, I—just came."

"It appears to me," said Alice, "that I might be consulted now and then. I haven't said anything about marrying you, anyway."

"No, of course you haven't," said Channing. Here he slipped his hands under her elbows, and in spite of her angry exclamations hoisted her up onto the running board of the car. "But you will, won't you? You haven't half the patience that I have, and you'll have to give in finally, you know."

Alice stood looking at him a second, while I cogitated whether to cough or beat a retreat. Then she put her hands on his chest, her arms at full length.

"I suppose so," she said, with a comical air of resignation. "I haven't had any peace since I met you, and maybe,

if I marry you, you'll let me alone. Lots of husbands do."

At this point, Channing's arms went out and Alice's doubled up at the elbows. I beat a hasty retreat.

When I got back to the others, I merely said that Alice was coming, and a moment or two later she rejoined us, her usual calm little self. There wasn't a sign on her face that anything out of the ordinary had occurred. Alice is a little thoroughbred.

Well, of course I didn't say anything then, and that night, after thinking it over, I decided that there wasn't much of anything for me to do except keep still and continue to treat Mr. Channing as if I thought him a bona-fide chauffeur. I could, however, give them a chance to have a little happiness together, as they evidently weren't ready to unmask. I sent for Channing.

He found me in the garden and stood waiting deferentially until I spoke.

"Channing," said I. He started a little. "Do you know which one of the young ladies who went riding with me yesterday was Miss Alice Halleday?"

"Yes," said Channing, after a quick glance at me.

"Well," said I, "unless you have something else to do, I wish you would take the car and go over and get her. Tell her I want to see her and would like to have her come back with you, unless she is busy. Can you manage to get away?" I didn't dare look at his face as I asked this last.

"Yes—ma'am. I'll go immediately," said Channing, and departed.

Half an hour later he came back with Alice.

"Don't put the car away, please," I called, as Alice came up the steps—I was sitting on the veranda—and so Channing sat in the car near by.

"What do you think of my new chauffeur?" I asked Alice.

"I'm crazy about him," said Alice, not to be outdone in brazen effrontery.

"He's a good chauffeur, too," I said.

"Yes," said Alice; "that is—of course he is. That's what I meant."

"Oh, yes, of course," said I.

We gazed at each other innocently a moment.

"I thought perhaps you'd like a ride this morning?" I said.

"I'd love it," said Alice.

"All right. He'll take you wherever you like, I guess."

"But aren't you coming?"

"I can't, dear. I'm busy. Besides, you don't need a chaperon. He's only a chauffeur, you know."

I went down to the car with her.

"Channing," said I, "you'll take Miss Halleday wherever she wants to go, won't you?"

I thought I detected a dawning suspicion in Mr. Hollister Channing's eye, but he answered quietly:

"Certainly, Mrs. Stanley."

I opened the forward door and turned to Alice. "You'd rather sit in front, wouldn't you?"

Alice got in.

"You'll probably enjoy it more there," I said, as a last broadside, and slammed the door.

They drove off and left me to sit on the veranda and laugh.

Just before luncheon I heard the car come in and went out to the garage at once.

"Channing," said I, "did Miss Halleday enjoy her ride, do you think?"

Channing looked at me suspiciously. "Yes—madame, I—I think so," he said at last. He had the grace to blush.

"Thank you for taking her," I said, and turned back to the house. I could feel his eyes following me.

After luncheon I was in the garden working over some rosebushes, when I looked up and found Mr. Channing standing in front of me. He began without preamble.

"Mrs. Stanley," he said, "I have a confession to make to you."

"Quite so," said I, liking the steady way he looked at me.

He was startled: "You—you knew, then?" he said.

"No," said I, "not until I saw you and heard you speak. But, my dear—ah—Channing," I went on, smiling, "you didn't seriously expect to fool a woman more than five minutes, did you?"

"I didn't think you'd notice," he said, in a disgruntled tone. He had me there, rather, if he had only known it.

"To be quite frank with you," I said hastily, "I unintentionally overheard your—ah—conversation with Alice that day we drove to the inn."

Mr. Channing gasped. Then, after a moment, he took a step forward and held out his hand. "You're a—brick!" he said.

I started to shake hands with him, and then, thinking better of it, slipped off my rings. Then I gave him my hand.

He shook it, but looked puzzled. I explained.

"I've shaken hands with large men under stress of excitement before," I said; "and I find it's a little less painful if there are no rings to cut into my fingers."

He laughed. "You really are," he said.

"What?" said I, knowing quite well.

"A brick," said he. "But there's more yet."

"More confession?"

"Yes." He dived into his pocket and handed me a telegram, which I opened.

It said:

Father bringing me Beechwood Sunday after you; cannot stop him. MOTHER.

"Well?" said I, after I had read it.

"You see," he replied, "father and mother have never been East before. They came on this year to see me graduate. Well, I told them about—about Alice—all about her—who she was, and

all—and mother was sweet about it, but father wouldn't hear of it. You know, or perhaps you don't know, that they sometimes have queer ideas out West about Eastern society people. Father is a big lumberman, and he's a wonder, but—well—he's a self-made man, and he thinks all Eastern people are—that is—he doesn't know much about them. So he's coming on here to rescue me, I suppose, from the designing clutches of Alice Haleday." He smiled at me whimsically.

"Well," said I, in a resigned tone, "I suppose you want me to help you?"

"You've been so kind about it all," he said, "that I thought perhaps you would tell me what you think I'd better do."

"That," said I judicially, "is very diplomatically put."

"Alice told me that, from what her sister Marjorie said, she thought you would be the best one to ask about it," he replied, without a smile. "I'll get even with Alice and Marjorie, too, some day."

"Perhaps you'd better leave it to me," I said. "I'll see what I can do. I suppose your father has this address and will come here?"

"Yes," he said lugubriously. "I suppose he got it from mother."

"Then you'd better take Alice for a ride Sunday afternoon. They can't get here before the afternoon. I'll be here to welcome them, and I'll try and smooth things over before you get back. Bring Alice back here about five. There's only one good train, which gets in about four. That will give me time enough."

"You're tremendously good," he said. "You really are. I can't tell you how grateful I am."

"That's all right," I said. "In the meantime, I want you to do something for me."

He looked at me inquiringly.

"Don't let Mr. Stanley know any-

thing about it. Go on being chauffeur just as usual. I want to pay him back for the trick he played me when he introduced you to me."

Mr. Channing agreed, and we left it at that. He went back to the garage. All this happened on Friday.

Sunday morning I told Gerald to keep Walter at his house by hook or by crook through the afternoon, and then to come back with him and bring the others along to dinner.

Early in the afternoon Alice strolled over by herself, and I sent Mr. Channing out with her for a ride. Then I sat down to wait. I was rather touched by the trusting way they left everything to me.

Our cottage is not far from the station, and about a quarter past four I heard the train come in. A few moments later one of the dilapidated station hacks deposited at the foot of the garden the quaintest pair of old people. The man was well over six feet, and massively built, with grizzled hair and a fine, leonine head and face. As he got out and turned to help his wife, my throat tightened suddenly; he reminded me so of my own father and the funny, possessive way he had with my mother. Channing's mother was a tiny little thing, with a black bonnet.

They glanced about them a moment, paid their driver, and then came up the path, side by side. As they slowly climbed the steps, I rose to meet them.

Mr. Channing, senior, removed his hat, but Mrs. Channing spoke.

"Is—is this Mrs. Stanley?" she asked, in a rather desperate little voice.

"Madame," boomed the old gentleman, before I could answer, "we have come for our son."

"Now, Dan"—the little, old lady pulled his sleeve—"you promised to let me do the talking."

"Yes, I am Mrs. Stanley. How do you do? You are Mrs. Channing, aren't you?" I went forward and took

her hand. "Please come and sit down," I went on, leading her to a chair. "You must be all tired out after that terrible train."

"Th—thank you," she said, in a bewildered way, and sat down. "Daniel would come," she added helplessly.

"Won't you sit down?" I said, turning to Mr. Channing, with a smile I reserve for special emergencies.

"We have come—ah—Why—yes, thank you," and he sat down.

"I am very glad indeed to have the pleasure of meeting you both," I said, smiling, "because, although he has been with us so short a time, both my husband and I have the greatest admiration for your son. Now, please take off your wrap." This to Mrs. Channing, as I took it from her shoulders. "And let me get you something cool to drink after that hot, dusty ride," and I rang the bell.

"Please don't trouble, ma'am," said Mrs. Channing, now thoroughly bewildered.

"Would you like a little sherry?" I said. "Or would you rather have lemonade?"

"We have come—" began Mr. Channing, but the boom was gone from his voice. "We came—to—to see about him," he concluded vaguely.

"Bring some sherry," I said to the butler, and then, turning to the old people, "I'm sorry he isn't here to meet you, but I had told Miss Halleday that he would take her for a ride this afternoon, so I promised your son that I would do my best to entertain you." This apologetically. "You see," I went on, "I am very, very fond of Alice Halleday, who is an unusually sweet girl and a very beautiful one, as well, and I've been afraid that she might—you know how foolish girls are sometimes"—this appealingly to Mrs. Channing—"that she might fall in love with some one who wasn't worthy of her. So when I learned that she and your

son were engaged, I was tremendously pleased, because he is, I think, about the only young man I know who is good enough for her. Of course," I went on, "I didn't know anything about it when he first came, but, of course, one could see at once that he wasn't a chauffeur, and so he finally told me about it. I am so glad you could come this afternoon, because he is bringing her back with him, and she will have a chance to meet you. She is very anxious to meet you, as she has heard so much about you from your son."

"But I don't understand, ma'am," said Mr. Channing. "Is he your chauffeur still?"

"Well," I said, "your son thought it would be simpler to continue with us until you met his fiancée and gave your approval, so no one else knows anything about it. Then, too," I went on innocently, carrying the war into the enemy's country, "I believe, for some reason that I don't understand, he is rather short of funds, and as he makes a *very good chauffeur*"—smiling—"we decided to let matters go on as before, until you came."

"Daniel," said Mrs. Channing sadly, "I told you you were too hard upon the boy." She was too sweet, looking up at her large husband, like a very small kitten addressing a gentle, but puzzled, St. Bernard. "And now you've forced our son to accept the kindness, almost the charity, of perfect strangers, who were, nevertheless, kinder to him than we were. I don't see how he can ever forgive us." I wanted to hug her.

"Why," said Daniel, "he—I—I don't approve—"

"Daniel," said his wife, "I'm sure we are very grateful to Mrs. Stanley for her kindness to our son, when his own parents treated him the way we have—"

"Why, I—" began Daniel.

I heard the car coming.

"There they are, now," I interrupted.

"And please don't feel that you owe me any gratitude, I am only too happy to have them so happy together."

The car stopped, and Alice came up the steps, looking sweetly pretty, with her light hair blowing about her face. She had taken off her hat and veil.

"Alice, dear," said I, "here are Mr. and Mrs. Channing."

"Oh!" said Alice. She ran forward, and paused hesitatingly.

Mrs. Channing gave her one swift glance, then she opened her arms.

"My dear!" she said.

In a moment Mrs. Channing released her, and Alice turned to Mr. Channing, who was standing beside his wife. She looked up at him questioningly a moment and then held up her face like a child.

Mr. Channing hesitated, let his eyes rest on her upturned face a fraction of a second, and was lost. He stooped and kissed her. Then he stammered something and blew his nose violently. Then Mr. Channing, junior, came up the steps, and we all talked at once.

A few minutes later, Walter and Gerald and the others came up.

I turned to Mr. Channing, junior.

"Then you and Mr. and Mrs. Channing will stay to dinner?" I said, in a clear voice. I had promised Walter I would and I did.

There isn't much more to tell. I introduced everybody all around, and explained a little, and we had a jolly dinner party that night. Every one made much of the old people, and they took to us, and especially to Alice, with warm-hearted thoroughness.

Channing, junior, and Alice went out West on their honeymoon in a big red touring car, which Alice drove a large part of the time.

Gerald, of course, insists that the whole thing was my doing, and that nobody's safe near me unless they're already married.



FOR BOOK LOVERS

WILLIAM J. LOCKE'S new book, "The Fortunate Youth," published by the John Lane Company, has a moral that, in these days of New Thought, ought to help to make the book a popular one. It is summed up on the last page by Barney Bill, an old peddler with a weakness for philosophical reflections. He says: "I believe in one thing. You believe in something else. But it doesn't matter a tuppenny dam what one believes in, so long as it's worth believing in. It's faith, sonny, that does it. Faith and purpose."

So it was by faith that Paul Kegworthy, a child of the slums, grew out of his hopelessly sordid environment to become the favorite of English society, the husband of a real princess, and a power in English politics.

Abused, beaten, starved by his mother and a brutal stepfather, his imagination is stimulated and he sees himself as a lost child, the heir of nobility, such as he has read of in the cheap fiction that falls into his hands. This is the vision that he grasps and clings to with such persistency that it becomes a living reality in his life.

Finally he leaves the dirty factory town in the company of the wandering peddler, and reaches London. Once there, his "absurd beauty" attracts attention, and his development into the prince that he has believed himself to be goes rapidly forward.

Like all of Mr. Locke's stories, "The

Fortunate Youth" has the indescribable quality of buoyancy and optimism and good humor, but it does not seem as if he has made all that could be made of his story. He is a writer of fairy tales, and this last one is not quite as convincing as "The Beloved Vagabond," or "Marcus Ordeyne," or "Septimus."



Robert W. Chambers' latest book is a collection of stories that have appeared from time to time in various periodicals, brought together and published by D. Appleton & Co. under the title of "Quick Action."

In an introduction—not a "foreword" or a "first word," but simply a "preface," for which Mr. Chambers has earned the thanks of his readers—the author refers to the scientific importance of crystal gazing, and assures us that "a vast field of individual research opens before the earnest, patient, and sober-minded investigator who shall study the subject and discover those occult laws which govern the intimate relations between crystals, playing cards, cigarettes, soiled pink wrappers, and the police." All of which suggests O. Henry.

It is in this spirit that Mr. Chambers describes the visions of the Countess Athalie, seen by her, a mere girl, curled up among her cushions near her drawing-room window, her eyes fixed upon a crystal sphere poised on a tripod.

To her audience of a half dozen men

she announces that "light is swift, thought is swifter, but love is the swiftest thing in life." And then, by way of illustration, she tells them a series of incidents of quick action in affairs of the heart.

For some reason, probably occult, the scene of all these adventures is in the neighborhood of Miami, Florida. Perhaps it is only in that region that it is possible for two young persons to meet, fall in love, and marry within twenty-four hours.

The book is written in Mr. Chambers' happiest vein, with the delicate irony and satire of which he is a consummate master.



"North of Fifty-Three," by Bertrand W. Sinclair, published by Little, Brown & Co., is another of those conventional tales of the West which come to us in a procession that seems endless.

"Roaring" Bill Wagstaff, a college-bred "bad man," is the hero of the tale. Hazel Weir, the school-teacher of Cariboo Meadows, is the heroine.

For variety, the scene of the tale is laid in the far Canadian Northwest, as remote as possible from the civilization of the Dakota plains and the Montana ranges and mountains.

Roaring Bill, who has a bad name in Cariboo Meadows, for some unexplained reason, shows his contempt of convention by kidnaping the young school-teacher and carrying her off to his lonely cabin in the mountains, where he keeps her for a whole winter, frankly announcing his intention of making her love him.

Naturally the young woman rebels, and so, when spring comes, he confesses his failure and takes her back to Victoria, where he leaves her with some of her friends. He has no sooner disappeared, however, than her heart tells her that she must go back to him. She makes the journey alone, through hun-

dreds of miles of "trackless wilderness," marries him, and joins him in a gold-seeking expedition still farther north.

If the yarn had not been told so many times before, in one way or another, it would be interesting. But under the circumstances the story lacks the element of suspense that keeps one's interest alive.



Herbert Jocelyn Beenham had spent twenty-five years of his life teaching boys in the grammar school of Thrigsby, County of Lancaster, England. The moral atmosphere of Thrigsby had been described as "listlessness shot with humor," so it may be imagined what its effect had been on H. J. Beenham after twenty-five years.

He had contracted a habit of crying out: "Ha! Art thou there, old mole?" whenever he caught a boy in any sort of dereliction, and hence his sobriquet, "Old Mole."

Probably he would have continued to stagnate in Thrigsby to the end of his days if young Matilda Burn had not misinterpreted the nature of the sympathy that he offered her in the seclusion of a second-class railway carriage. But the result of her mistake was his banishment in disgrace from Thrigsby and his subsequent wanderings with a traveling theatrical company to which Matilda also became annexed.

Thus Old Mole was forced to see something of life in spite of himself, and what he saw, how he saw it, and the consequences to him, go to the making of the story of "Old Mole," by Gilbert Cannon, published by D. Appleton & Co.

This is one of the few novels of this season that help to redeem the season's output of fiction from hopeless insignificance, and for this Mr. Cannon has put us under deep obligation. We venture to hope that his book will serve to

make him as widely known and loved by the American reading public as William J. Locke was through "The Beloved Vagabond."



"Somebody's Luggage," by F. J. Randall, published by the John Lane Company, is a highly entertaining yarn, involving the adventures of two yellow trunks, or "boxes," as the English know them.

It begins with Mr. Alfred Hopper's return from Paris, where he has been spending his vacation. He is a young man occupying the humble position of a clerk in a London office, and his opportunities for seeing life have been limited. It is not surprising, therefore, that his stay in Paris has not been entirely successful, and his state of mind during the trip across the Channel is not altogether happy.

When he lands at Dover, a chance combination of circumstances puts him in possession of a yellow trunk which is the property of another man, though its similarity to his own is sufficient to excuse his mistake.

A document that he finds in this trunk, followed by certain events that seem to occur without much active participation on his part, involve him, against his will, in complications regarding the inheritance of a substantial estate, and he is recognized as the heir.

The story, developed out of this situation, is told in a humorous vein, but, as incident is piled upon incident, it has that element of suspense which makes an interesting yarn.



Roy Norton can always be depended upon to tell a Western story in a manner that makes the reader feel that he has heard it for the first time and is having his first introduction to the romantic atmosphere of Western life.

"The Mediator," published by Wil-

liam J. Watt & Co., is Mr. Norton's latest book. Elisha Henley, the hero of the story, is a typical Western miner, the sort of character that has, it is true, appeared in many other tales of the West, but Mr. Norton has clothed him with humor and whimsicality and humanity so naturally and convincingly that he is actually a brand-new personality in fiction.

He is a gunman in the sense that he is skilled in the use of the "fan trigger," and is always ready when the occasion requires. But he is also a mediator, and, as he himself declares and proves, anxious to avoid trouble.

It is this anxiety that prompts him to leave the disturbed atmosphere of southern Arizona with his burro and seek a more peaceful settlement over the California border.

And he finds it, with a profitable mining claim and an attractive girl.



Important New Books.

"The Last Shot," Frederick Palmer; Charles Scribner's Sons.

"The Desert and Mrs. Ajax," E. S. Mofat; Moffat, Yard & Co.

"Bedesman 4," Mary J. H. Skrine; Century Co.

"You Never Know Your Luck," Sir Gilbert Parker; Geo. H. Doran Co.

"E," Julian Hinckley; Duffield & Co.

"Idle Wives," James Oppenheim; Century Co.

"Oh, Mr. Bidgood!" Peter Blundell; John Lane Co.

"Through Other Eyes," Amy McLaren; G. P. Putnam's Sons.

"Silent Sam," Harvey J. O'Higgins; Century Co.

"Overland Red," Anonymous; Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

"Ariadne of Allan Water," Sidney McCall; Little, Brown & Co.

"Grannie," Mrs. George Wemyss; Macmillan Co.

"The Woman's Law," Maravene Thompson; F. A. Stokes Co.

"Our Mr. Wrenn," Sinclair Lewis; Harper & Bros.

"Keeping Up Appearances," Maximilian Foster; D. Appleton & Co.

Talks With Ainslee's Readers

FEW authors have attracted so much attention in the last three or four years as Cosmo Hamilton. Aside from "Adam's Clay," "The Outpost of Eternity," "The Blindness of Virtue," and other much-talked-of novels, he has written nineteen successful plays.

Mr. Hamilton contributes the complete novelette to the August AINSLEE'S. In Billy Rudd he has created a lovable, whimsical fellow who possesses much of the charm of William J. Locke's most appealing heroes. "Nature's Vagabond," the title of the story, aptly describes him.



IN his sympathetic biography of the late Mrs. Grundy in this issue, Edgar Saltus clears up the question of the date of the lady's birth. Was Mrs. Grundy born the day that Byron died, or did Byron die on the day that Mrs. Grundy was born? was a question that might easily have agitated university faculties. Personally, we were greatly surprised to find that either was the case. We had always suspected that Mrs. Grundy must have been alive and kicking—violently—when Byron made his bitter attack upon that then new dance, the waltz. The poem certainly seems to show her influence, and there have been those who even went so far as to maintain that it must have been a Byron-Grundy collaboration. But now that Mr. Saltus has definitely determined Mrs. Grundy's birthday, we see that the apparent evidences of her hand in "The Waltz" is merely a case of narrow minds running in the same channel.

Here is a strange coincidence: Byron's poem, "The Waltz," attacking the "made-in-Germany" dance that was then taking England by storm, was published in the spring of 1813. It was almost exactly one hundred years later that the next dancing craze, which was to result so disastrously for Mrs. Grundy, reached its height.

SPEAKING of the craze that at present is causing most of our population between the ages of nine and ninety to gumshoe around in pairs to music, we have experienced the utmost difficulty in getting a story that shall adequately portray the lure and fascination of the game. We appealed, one after another, to the writers we considered most fitted for the task, but received, instead of the atmosphere of the dance itself, captured and put on paper, mere prosaic tango lessons, thinly disguised as fiction. Then, just as we had given up hope, a man noted for grim and dramatic tales of the sea, a man who is said to be more at home on the ocean than on land, dropped into the office and asked us, rather doubtfully, if we had any objection to tango stories. He hesitatingly produced one. We read it. Next month you will read it. "Lips" is its title. Its author is— But wait a minute.

Years ago we were told that the busiest creature in the world was a Newfoundland puppy intent upon burying a bone on a marble-topped table. Perhaps this holds good, but we feel that John Fleming Wilson's activities easily entitle him to second place. Since he left Princeton, in 1897, for Vladivostok, he has been knocking around keeping the dust out of the four corners of the earth. He knows Russia and Japan. In 1900 he was in Panama. After teaching a year in Portland, Oregon, he took up writing as a business. During the intervals when he was not experimenting with wireless, sailing before the mast, racing trotting horses, soldiering, or living on lightships, he has occupied various editorial positions in California, Oregon, and Hawaii. Aside from being the author of "The Land Claimers," "The Man Who Came Back," and several other books, Mr. Wilson has had published over one hundred and fifty short stories. But that, of course, is his regular business. From what we have been able to gather, he has at various times held these positions: Able seaman, quartermaster, professor, carpenter,

stoker, chauffeur, horse trainer, captain, private in U. S. volunteers, major in foreign service, pilot, and lecturer on Greek lyric poetry.

Mr. Wilson has made some long jumps in his travels. But none longer than his jump from the tang of the sea air to the air of the tango tea. You will enjoy "Lips." It is by John Fleming Wilson.

AMAGAZINE, to be entertaining in August, when the mercury is raising the roof off the thermometer, has to be unusually entertaining. The next AINSLEE'S, we believe, successfully meets the test.

"Too Much Ginger," by A. D. Pitney, is a humorous yarn that you will find delightfully breezy in any kind of humidity. Then, just to illustrate that for AINSLEE readers there never can be "too much ginger," we are going to print another of Bonnie R. Ginger's delightfully human tales. In "This Way to the Rocks" she takes us to a fashionable summer resort on the New England coast and introduces us to a public-spirited citizen who loves all mankind. His daughter's affections become more concentrated.

For the next of his seductive superwomen, Albert Payson Terhune goes back three thousand years. Delilah, the dainty, is his subject this time, and the portrait he draws of her is a surprisingly vivid one.

Three stories in the coming number, for widely different reasons, are unusually timely. Nothing could be more appropriate for the dog days than "Seb," himself a dog. His story is told with rare pathos and sympathy by Andrul, the author of "A Fa."

All eyes are still on Mexico. Probably no writer of fiction knows his Mexico better than does Herman Whitaker. In "The Phoenix" he tells of a staid, middle-aged business man, who, because of the lure of the spring air, the smell of the water front, and mysterious hints dropped by swarthy-faced adventurers, finds himself the central figure in an expedition involving filibustering, revolutions, and beauty in distress.

The third story of peculiar significance just at this time, when capital and labor are at such bitter odds in the mining districts of Colorado, is "Donovan's Twins," by William Chester Estabrook. Donovan, a big-hearted, clear-headed union miner, christens his twin boys Capital Donovan and Labor Donovan, feeling that, like them, the interests after which they are named should be able to lie peacefully in the same crib and nourish themselves from the same bottle. It's a powerful little story, with a real pull to it; one of the sort that sometimes do more toward bringing about a wholesome understanding between warring factions than argument or arbitration ever can.

WITH the August number you will have the fourth and concluding installment of Marie Van Vorst's splendid novel, "John Tremaine." Some of you mildly protested when we announced that we had found a story so big, so important, as to force us to abandon temporarily our policy of "everything complete in each number." We are glad to hear from so many of you that you now agree that AINSLEE'S could not afford *not* to print such a story.



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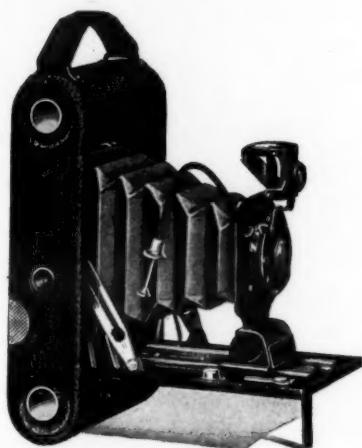
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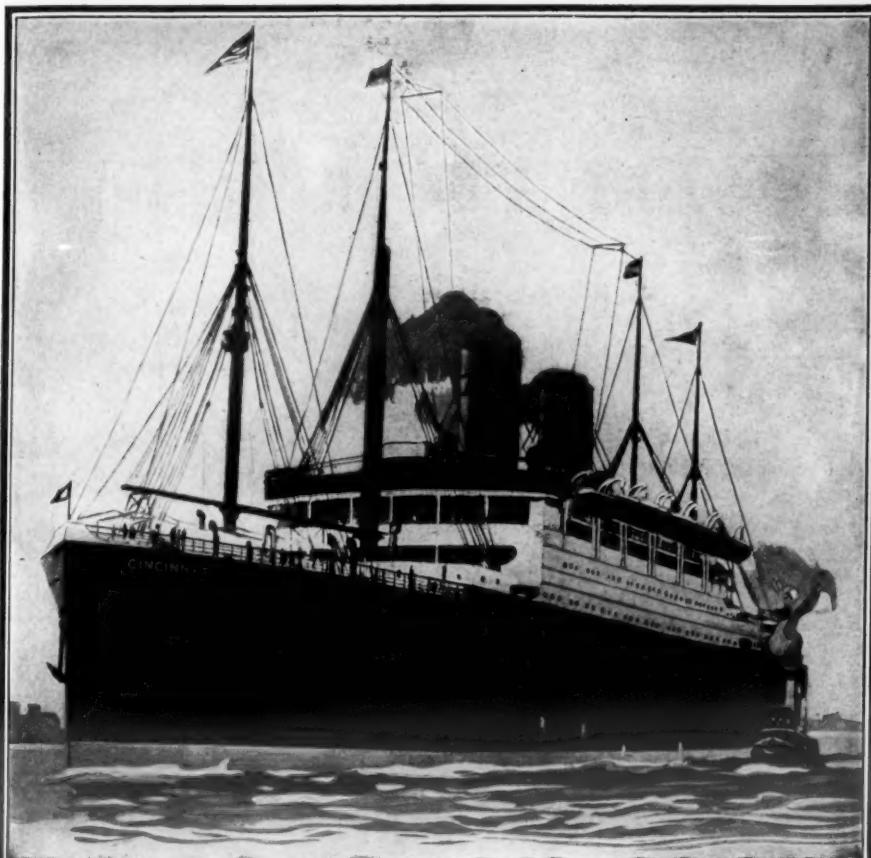
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AGENTS, Would you take a steady job where you can clear \$2 to \$300 weekly to start, and work up to yearly profits of \$2,000 or more? No experience required. Sensational new selling plan. Great crew manager promotion—exclusive territory. Act quick. E. M. Davis, Pres. R7 Daylin Bld., Chicago.

SILK Hose Free to Agents selling famous Triplewear guaranteed hosiery. Great money making proposition. \$30. Week. Write to-day. Triplewear Mills, Dept. S8, 13th and Sansom, Phila., Pa.

I MADE \$50.00 in five years with a small mail order business; began with \$5. Send for free booklet. Tell how. Heacock, Box 716, Lockport, New York.

WILL Pay Reliable Man or Woman \$12.50 to distribute 100 Free pins. Perfumed Borax Soap Powder among friends. No money required. R. Ward Company, 224 Institute Pl., Chicago.

AGENTS—RED HOT SUMMER Seller—Concentrated soft drink—orangeade, grape, raspberry, etc., 7 kinds—Small package—enormous demand. Whirlwind sales—astonishing profits. Get it quick—while it's new. Write to-day for full particulars. American Products Co., 3101 Sycamore St., Cincinnati, Ohio.

HUSTLING MAN under 50 wanted each locality. Introduce our New Membership. Spare or full time—\$50.00 to \$300.00 monthly. Address: The I-L-U 2030, Covington, Ky.

MEN OF IDEAS and inventive ability should write for new "Lists of Needed Inventions," Patent Buyers and "How to Get Your Patent and Your Money." Advice Free. Randolph & Co., Patent Attorneys, Dept. 46, Washington, D. C.

HONEST MAN WANTED in each town to distribute free advertising premiums; \$15. a week to start; experience unnecessary; references required. Address: McLean, Black & Co., 8 S. Beverly St., Boston, Mass.

GOVERNMENT positions pay big money. Get prepared for "exams" by former U. S. Civil Service Examiner. Free booklet, Patterson Civil Service School, Box Y, Rochester, N. Y.

FREE ILLUSTRATED BOOK tells of about 300,000 protected positions in U. S. service. Thousands of vacancies every year. There is a big chance here for you, sure and generous pay, lifetime employment. Just ask for booklet S 22. No obligation. Earl Hopkins, Washington, D. C.

Thousands Government Jobs Open to Men and Women. Big pay. Write immediately for free list. Franklin Institute, Dept. G-7, Rochester, N. Y.

AGENTS—THE BIGGEST SELLER Out. Concentrated Beer Tablets. A good glass of Lager Beer for everybody—everywhere. Show it—sell them all. Strictly legitimate. Makes real beer just by adding water. Carry right in your pocket. Enormous demand—immense profits. Full particulars—Free. The Am-brew Co., Dept. 1170, Cincinnati, O.

Agents and Help Wanted—Continued

At last—A vacuum clothes washer; washes a tub of clothes in 3 min. Patented Jan. 30, 1914. Washday now a pleasure. Women grab it at \$15. Agts. price 50c in quantities. Wendell Washer Co., 226 Oak St., Lepisic, O.

LOCAL Representative Wanted. Splendid income assured right man to act as our representative after learning our business thoroughly by mail. Former experience unnecessary. All we require is honesty, ability, ambition and willingness to learn a lucrative business. No soliciting or traveling. All or spare time only. This is an exceptional opportunity for a man in your section to get into a big paying business without capital and become independent for life. Write at once for full particulars. National Co-Operative Realty Co., L-338 Marden Bldg., Washington, D. C.

Coins, Stamps, Etc.

\$2. to \$800. paid for hundreds of old coins dated before 1885. Send 10¢ at once for New Illust'd Coin Value Book, 4x7, showing prices we guarantee to pay. Get posted. Clarke & Co., Coin Dealers, Box 132, Le Roy, N. Y.

Motion Picture Plays

MOTION PICTURE PLAYS wanted. You can write them. We teach you by mail. No experience needed. Big demand, good pay. Details free. Associated Motion Picture Schools, 624 Sheridan Road, Chicago.

WRITE Moving Picture Plays: \$100 each; all or spare time; correspondence course unnecessary; details free. Atlass Publishing Co., 309, Cincinnati, O.

HOW TO WRITE Photoplays is a brand-new volume devoted to motion picture playwriting. Contains a model scenario, a list of 30 scenario buyers, and all information necessary. Price 25¢. Enterprise Pub. Co., R 3348 Lowe Avenue, Chicago.

Patents and Lawyers

U. S. and Foreign Patents and Trade Marks. Free Book and opinion on patentability. Joshua R. H. Potts, Patent Lawyer, 805 G St., Washington: 8 Dearborn St., Chicago; 929 Chestnut St., Philadelphia.

PATENTS SECURED OR FREE returned. Send sketch for free report as to patentability. Guide Book and What to Invent, with valuable List of Inventions Wanted, sent free. One Million Dollars offered for one Invention. Patents secured by us advertised free in *World's Progress*, sample free. Victor J. Evans & Co., Washington, D. C.

PATENTS THAT PROTECT AND PAY. Advice and books free. Highest references. Best results. Promptness assured. Send sketch or model for free search. Watson E. Coleman, Patent Lawyer, 624 F Street, Washington, D. C.

IDEAS WANTED—Manufacturers are writing for patents procured through me. 3 books with list 200 inventions wanted sent free. Advice free. I get patent or no fee. R. B. Owen, 39 Owen Bldg., Washington, D. C.

Business Opportunities

I MADE A FORTUNE IN MAIL-Order Business. From small beginning my sales now total close to One Million Five Hundred Thousand Dollars annually. Why can't you do as well? Get my free booklet—"How To Make Money In The Mail Order Business," Randolph Rose, 226 Rose Bldg., Chattanooga, Tenn.

FREE FOR SIX MONTHS.—My Special offer to introduce my magazine "Investing for Profit." It is worth \$10 a copy to anyone who has been getting poorer while the rich, richer. It demonstrates the real earning power of money and shows how anyone, no matter how poor, can acquire riches. "Investing for Profit" is the only progressive financial journal published. It shows how \$100 grows to \$2,200. Write Now and I'll send it six months free. H. L. Barber, 408, 20 W. Jackson Blvd., Chicago.

WOULD you like to own a good paying mail order business? We have a line that sells repeat orders all the time you can start in spare time; invest a dollar or two a week and soon own a nice business of your own. Write for particulars. Nadico, 1668 Belmont Ave., Chicago, Ill.

SIX MONTHS FREE. Our little Magazine describing splendid investment opportunities and other interesting facts concerning the Great Northwest. Send for your copy today. Hanauer-Graves Co., Spokane, Wash.

Music and Song Poems

COMPOSERS—We arrange for piano, quartet, solo, orchestra (small and large), brass band, single songs, instrumental numbers, productions, etc. We make specialty of amateur and minstrel shows, writing the music and lyrics and coaching. We are not publishers. Our terms are most reasonable. Al. Lesser, Arranging Bureau, 145 West 45th St., New York.

SONG POEMS WANTED. We will write music to your words, publish, advertise and copyright in your name. Send us your song poems or melodies. Instructive booklet free. Mark-Goldsmit Co., Dept. 15, Washington, D. C.

SONG POEMS WANTED: I've paid writers thousands in royalties. Send me samples of your work for free criticism, or write for valuable Free Booklet and most liberal, legitimate proposition offered. Absolute protection. Est. 16 years. Numerous successes. John T. Hall, Pres., 100 Columbus Circle, New York.

SONG POEMS WANTED: Money in successful songs. Send us your poems for examination. We revise, write the music, pay for and secure copyright in your name, arrange for orchestra and furnish song slides. Particulars, terms and book "How Music Makes Money" Free. C. L. Partee Co., 405 Astor Theatre Building, New York.

Miscellaneous

WHAT CAN THE COMBINED PURCHASING POWER of 70,000 automobile owners accomplish? A post card to the International Automobile League, Home Office, 2984 Main Street, Buffalo, N. Y., will bring the answer.

Send for This Interesting and Instructive Book on TRAVEL

Just Off the Press



It Is Entirely FREE

We expect a greater demand for this 40 page, illustrated booklet on travel, than has ever been known for any other ever published for free distribution.

Mother'sill's Travel Book tells you what to take on a journey and what not to take—how to pack and how to best care for your baggage and gives exact information as to checking facilities, weights, etc., in foreign countries—gives tables of money values—distances from New York—tells when, who and how much, to “tip.” In fact this booklet will be found invaluable to all who travel or are contemplating taking a trip in this country or abroad.

Published by the proprietors of the famous **Mother'sill's Sea Sick Remedy** as a practical hand book for travelers.

This edition is limited so we suggest that you send your name and address at once, and receive a copy. (A postal will bring it.) Please address our Detroit office for this booklet.

MOTHERSILL REMEDY CO.

461 Henry Smith Bldg., Detroit, Mich.
Also at 19 St. Bride Street, London, England.
Branches in Montreal, New York, Paris, Milan and Hamburg.

7% Bond Investment With 50% Stock Bonus

First Mortgage \$100 Bonds paying 7%, with 50% Treasury Stock bonus which should pay substantial dividends.

This investment will stand strictest investigation.

J. A. PARKER & CO., Fiscal Agents,
64 Broadway, New York City.



EXTRAORDINARY OFFER—30 days (one month's) free trial on this finest of bicycles—the "Ranger." We will ship it to you on approval, freight prepaid, without a cent deposit in advance. This offer is made in addition to our big catalog showing our full line of bicycles for men and women, boys and girls at prices never before equalled for like quality. It is a cyclopedic list of all kinds of bicycles.

WRITE TODAY for our catalog. We will send it to you at once. The offer is good for 30 days. We will close out at once, at \$25 to \$60 each, all bicycles in our stock. We have a large number of second hand bicycles taken in trade by our retail stores.

WE DON'T SELL BIKES but we furnish them to you to ride and exhibit a sample 1914 model *Ranger* furnished by us.

It Costs You Nothing to learn what we offer you and how we do it. You will be astonished and convinced. Do not buy a bicycle first. Write to us and you will get our catalog and new low prices and marvelous offers. Write today.

MEAD CYCLE CO., Dept. C-110 CHICAGO, ILL.

SPECIALS
For \$25

560

533

565

554

590

LOFTIS

DIAMONDS ON CREDIT

Great Bargain Sale

These handsome Diamond Rings are our Great Leaders. Finest Quality pieces which Diamonds perfect in cut and full of fiery brillancy. Mountings are of the best gold and set with brilliant diamonds.

CREDIT TERMS: One-Fifth Down, Balance in 6 Equal Monthly Amounts.

Write for Free Catalog. Over 2,000 beautiful illustrations of Diamonds, Watches, Jewelry, Silverware, etc. Send us your name and address and we will mail you a copy, all charges prepaid.

If you have no money, just go on credit, the purchase price and pay the balance in six equal monthly payments. Send for catalog today—NOW.

LOFTIS BROS. & CO.

National Credit Jewelers
Dept. 8843, 106 N. State St., Chicago, Ill.
Stores also in Pittsburgh; St. Louis; Omaha.

DELATONE

Removes Hair or Fuzz from Face, Neck or Arms



Delatone is an old and well-known scientific preparation, in powder form, for the quick removal of hairy growths—no matter how thick or stubborn they may be. A paste is made with some Delatone and water, then spread on hairy surface. After two or three minutes it is rubbed off and the hairs have vanished. When the skin is washed it will be white, firm and hairless. Delatone is used by thousands of people and is highly recommended by Mrs. Mae Martin, the authority on "Beauty."

Delatone is sold in small quantities, an original one-ounce jar will be mailed to any address upon receipt of One Dollar by

THE SHEFFIELD PHARMACAL COMPANY
3255 Sheffield Avenue—Dept. B. F.—Chicago

\$130 The Greatest Motor Boat For The Money Ever Built

MULLINS 16 foot special steel launch affords the pleasures of motor boating, and provides a safe, seaworthy, dependable motor boat, with graceful lines and beautiful finish—**Absolutely Guaranteed Against Puncture**—Safe as a life boat, with air chambers concealed beneath decks in bow and stern—Can't warp, split, dry out or become weak—No chance to leak.

MULLINS \$130 Special Launch is equipped with 2-Cycle, 8-H. P. Ferro engines, that can't stall—Speed 8 1/2 to 9 miles an hour—One man control—Fitted with **MULLINS** silent under-water exhaust.

The **MULLINS** boat—roomy and comfortable—has 4 foot beam and 11 foot 4 inch cockpit—possesses the greatest launch value ever offered. Write today for beautifully illustrated motor boat catalog, containing full particulars.

THE W. H. MULLINS COMPANY
320 Franklin St., Chicago, Ill., U. S. A.
THE WORLD'S LARGEST BOAT BUILDERS

MULLINS STEEL BOATS CAN'T SINK



*Cleanliness
Comfort
Charm*

COLGATE'S COLD CREAM

You need it to free the pores of clogging dust—to soothe and soften the skin when parched and dry—to relieve irritation and to smooth the roughening of wind and weather.

Colgate Quality
Ask your dealer the price
A dainty trial tube—most convenient for week-end and short trips—sent for 4c in stamps.

COLGATE & CO.
Dept. A, 199 Fulton St., New York



Makers of Cashmere Bouquet Soap—luxurious, lasting, refined.

Asthma AND Hay Fever

Send for **Free Trial Bottle** of **HIMALYA**, the valuable remedy for Hay Fever and Asthma. We have hundreds of reliable testimonials showing positive and permanent cures to persons who have suffered for years after other remedies and change of climate had failed.

Write today to the

HIMALYA CO.
82 Warren Ave. W.
Detroit, Mich.

AGENTS GET BUSY


The fastest selling beer ever put out. It's simply wonderful. A good glass of Lager Beer is wanted in every home. Thousands are now making their own Beer with "AMBREW." A few minutes does the work. A concentration of Barley Malt and Hops. Amazing discovery has excited America. Order "AMBREW" today in your pocket and supply the thirsty. A pure, sparkling Lager Beer for 1 cent a glass. Wanted everywhere—wet or dry—strictly legitimate. Show it—sell them all.

BIG MONEY MAKER

Beer in concentrated form. Everybody wild about it. Field hardly touched. Exclusive venture being snapped up. An opportunity to easily make \$8 a day and over. A red hot seller in red hot weather. The season is on—get busy. send a postal today—we'll show you how to make money quick.

The AMBREW Co. Dep't 1371 Cincinnati, O.



25 years on the market. Shac is sold by all druggists wherever heads ache. 12 doses for 25c, or send 10c for trial sample of 3 wafers.

The Zymole Co., 108 John St., New York City



Carnival on the Bou' Miche

Voici la mode: CIGARETTE-TIME IS ALWAYS CARNIVAL-TIME

In truth, the one thing that man has fashioned for his universal delight—for his hours of gaiety and leisure, for his pleasure, his contentment, his comfort and his gusto of living . . . is his cigarette.

Voici la mode: Make your own cigarettes from the golden grains of your favorite tobacco, wrapped always in

RIZ LA

(Pronounced: REE-LAH-KROY)

FAMOUS CIGARETTE PAPERS

These papers add the touch of the exquisite to the now fashionable rage for rolling your own cigarettes. They are so thin . . . so strong . . . so light . . . so odorless . . . so tasteless . . . so pure!

Made from the finest linen-flax, perfected at last through long years of experimentation by the members of the La Croix family, the papers Riz La Croix have achieved the ideal . . . the *best* cigarette papers *in the world!*

There are 15,000,000 books of Riz La Croix papers sold annually in Paris.

90,000,000 sold on the Continent; 60,000,000 sold in this country.



Two Interesting, Illustrated Booklets—one about RIZ LA CROIX Cigarette Papers, the other showing how to "Roll Your Own" cigarettes—sent anywhere in U.S. on request. Address The American Tobacco Co., Room 1186, 111 Fifth Ave., N.Y.

HAVE SOFT WHITE HANDS



CUTICURA SOAP

Used exclusively and Cuticura Ointment occasionally work wonders. Treatment: On retiring, soak the hands in hot water and Cuticura Soap. Dry, anoint with Cuticura Ointment and wear soft bandages or old loose gloves during the night.

★ SAMPLES FREE ★

Cuticura Soap and Cuticura Ointment are sold throughout the world. Send post-card to nearest depot for free sample of each with 32-page book: Newbery, 27, Charterhouse Sq., London; R. Towns & Co., Sydney, N.S.W.; Lennon, Ltd., Cape Town; Muller, Maclean & Co., Calcutta and Bombay; Potter Drug & Chem. Corp., Boston, U.S.A.

BE A SALESMAN

EARN \$1,000 TO \$5,000 A YEAR

We will teach you to be a high grade Salesman in eight weeks by mail and assure you **definite propositions** from a large number of reliable firms offering you opportunities to earn good wages while you are learning. No former experience required. Write today for particulars, large list of good openings and testimonials from hundreds of our students who are now earning \$100 to \$500 a month.

Address nearest office, Dept. A-7,
National Salesmen's Training Association
Chicago New York Kansas City San Francisco



\$4 Per Month! FREE TRIAL!



Genuine Oliver Vassell Typewriter. We sell direct; save you agents' commissions and expenses. Ship on air mail. \$4 per month if you keep it. Send for free booklet *T*. See how you save \$11.50 on high-grade machine.

Typewriter Distributing Syndicate
162-166 N. Michigan Boulevard, Chicago

Wrinkles

Thousands have successfully used this formula to remove traces of age, illness or worry; 1 oz. of pure

Powdered SAXOLITE

dissolved in $\frac{1}{2}$ pt. witch hazel; use as a face wash. The effect is almost magical. Deep wrinkles are often completely and quickly vanish. Face becomes firm, smooth, fresh, and you look years younger. No harm to tenderest skin. Get genuine Saxolite (powdered) at any drug store.



KILL THE HAIR ROOT

My method is the only way to prevent the hair from growing again. Easy, painless, harmless. No scars. Booklet free. Write to-day.

D.J. Mahler, 297L Mahler Park, Providence, R.I.



Sent, Aug., 1891. Send for lecture: "Great Subject of Fact."

No Billing. No Harm Work.

DR. JOHN WILSON GIBBS' TREATMENT FOR THE PERMANENT REDUCTION OF OBESITY

Harmless and Positive. No Failure. Your reduction is assured—reduce to stay. One month's treatment \$5.00. Mail or office, 1370 Broadway, New York. A PERMANENT REDUCTION GUARANTEED.

"Is positive and permanent."—N. Y. Herald, July 9, 1893.

"On Obesity, Dr. Gibbs is the recognised authority."—N. Y. World, July 7, 1893.

PROF. L. HUBERT'S MALVINA CREAM

"The One Reliable
Beautifier"

Positively cures Freckles, Sunburn, Pimples, Ringworm and all imperfections of the skin and prevents wrinkles. It does not merely cover up blemishes, the Malvina Lotion and Ichthyol Soap should be used in connection with Malvina Cream. At all drug stores. Send 25c post paid on receipt of price. Cream, 50c. Lotion, 50c. Soap, 25c.

Prof. L. HUBERT, Toledo, Ohio



Romances of Modern Business

THE American romance is in the large office-buildings and the marts of trade; it is the romance of great achievements in commerce, in industrial leadership. And it is a wonderful romance! The child of the world's nations is leading them!—ARNOLD BENNETT.

CHAPTER V

A Hobby that Circled the World

CURIOSITY, according to the infallible Mr. Webster, is: *inquisitiveness; a disposition to inquire into anything, especially something new or strange, often implying meddlesomeness.*

There is another definition of the word which should have been specified in the immortal work of Mr. Webster—the irrepressible emotions of a boy desirous of learning something that appears to him as secretive or mysterious. It was this species of curiosity that affected the *persona principialis* of this story and inspired an interesting life-work.

Rochester, New York, is not one of those cities designated by O. Henry as the hives of American romance; but that the metropolis of upper New York State contributed its quota of romance is conclusively shown in this account.

In Rochester, some years ago, as in most every other place, there were mothers who took their little boys to have their pictures taken; and also in Rochester were boys who saw in the camera and dark-room much mystery and illusion. One such boy was particularly insistent on knowing all about the camera and the mysteries of the dark-chamber. His curiosity would know no relief until the photographer had explained some of their secrets.

This boy's name was George Eastman.

As time passed the youth's interest in picture-taking and negative development was heightened. The more he saw of the workings of the camera the more fascinated he became. Curiosity impelled him into other channels of research. Within a few years he had become skilled as a photographer in an amateur way.

The impedimenta then essential to the production of photographs appalled the young man. Being of an investigative turn of mind, he sought a means of relief from the burden of the wet-plate process then in vogue. What is known as the dry-plate had been invented, but was not in general use. Young Eastman decided to manufacture the sensitive medium. This did much to simplify photography.

Though progress had been made, the young man felt that he had his most important contribution to photography yet to make. The idea was evolved of a flexible support that could be rolled upon a spool and take the place of the glass support, and in 1884 the rollable film, with a roll-holder, was offered for sale. Still young Eastman was not satisfied. He felt that the handicaps in the way of amateur success were too numerous. Finally, in 1888, the camera designed exclusively for use with film was made. And the Kodak was given to the world.

Even at this late date, the amateur photographer practically did not exist. The creation of a market for the Eastman products was a problem. Something more than invention was necessary to make the new idea a success. Here was an article that would bring pleasure to thousands of people and have a universal appeal! But how was the young inventor to tell the world of his Kodak?

Let us pause at this point of the story, step from the year 1888 and see what has come to pass in these twenty-six years. The Eastman Kodak Company today is one of the most sig-

A Hobby that Circled the World

nificant industrial organizations of the world, with a well-nigh perfect world-wide distribution.

The alert reader will wonder at this impressive development. How, in a little over a quarter of a century, did an obscure young inventor create a world-wide industry? A second thought will suggest to the reader that this great success would be possible only through a broad advertising appeal. And so it was with the Eastman Kodak Company.

In 1888, there had been few great advertising successes to point the way. Advertising to create a new world-want was pioneer work. But George Eastman became firmly convinced that the way to success lay through advertising.

The first commercial announcement of the Eastman Kodak Company appeared in a magazine in the fall of 1888. It was but a single column wide and a little over two inches long (thirty agate lines, to be exact). So began the advertising in the periodicals of national circulation that has carried the Kodak around the world.

There was immediate response. Orders came from all sections of the country. The inventor was besieged with inquiries about his camera. Then followed a vigorous and intelligent campaign of advertising in the weekly and monthly periodicals which to the present has seen no let-up. Thousands of pages of periodical advertising have told the story of the Kodak. As the advertising broadened the Kodak business has grown.

That the magazines and weeklies have been the backbone of Eastman Kodak advertising from its beginning indicates the faith that the head of this large industry has in such medi-

ums. Although local dealers have used other media for stimulating local trade, the Eastman Kodak Company has relied, to a great extent, on periodical publicity. And the international success of the company is a striking illustration of what periodical advertising can accomplish.

Those who have been in close touch with the Kodak industry declare that the wonderful growth of the Kodak idea has been due to two things—a right product and continuous intelligent advertising, backed up by an able business management. Advertising has been the propelling force of the Kodak business.

Through the magazines and weeklies the Eastman Company has been able to carry on a far-reaching and intelligent educational campaign. Kodak advertising from the first has been interesting in its psychological phases. It did more than advertise the camera; it advertised amateur photography. It did not merely say what the Kodak could do; it showed how the Kodak could be used. Kodakery was explained in word and picture.

"You press the button; we do the rest," a phrase coined for Kodak advertising, caught the public fancy and was used for years. Later improvements, whereby the Kodaker himself could "do the rest," led to the retirement of the catch-phrase.

Here again is shown the broad field of the national periodicals for serving the advertiser and the public. That the Kodak achieved a great industrial success is no more important than that the creating of a world-wide interest in Kodakery by the magazines and weeklies added much pleasure to many peoples of the earth, furthered the science of photography, and had a strong educational value.



WINTON SIX Model 21—Now Ready

A New Beauty for 1915

With Distinctive Individuality for You Personally

THE rare beauty of this car challenges admiration. Best of all, we give *your personal* car a special individuality to meet your own good taste and to distinguish *your* car from every other owner's car. But that's a matter we prefer to take up with you personally.

All the sterling features of Winton construction are retained in Model 21. The enlarged radiator and bonnet blend into a pleasing unit with the new body, which is of singularly attractive design. The raised stream-line panel has been seen heretofore on limousines only. Doors are wider and swing on concealed hinges. No outside handles. Seats are roomier. The cowl board arrangement is new. A tonneau light is provided. Springs are always automatically oiled by Dann cushion inserts. Wheel base 136 inches (on four-passenger and runabout cars, 130 inches). Especial provision has been made for the most satisfying comfort.

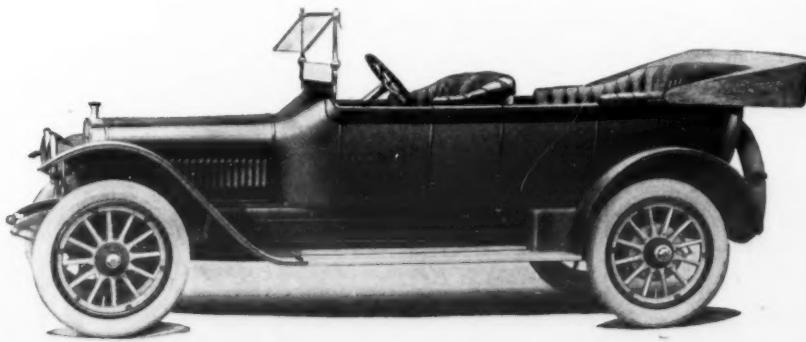
Note the Equipment:

Electric starter, or Air starter. You may have your choice *without extra charge*.
Complete electric lighting system.
One-man top of finest mohair; has easily handled curtains.
New-design rain-vision glass front.
Klaxon electric horn, concealed under bonnet.
Waltham eight-day clock, with highest-grade watch movement.

First-grade Warner speedometer.
Improved tire carriers at rear.
Demountable rims.
Tires—37 x 5-inch, all-around.
Power-driven tire pump.
Full set of tools.
The price of the five passenger car is \$3250
fully equipped, and—
You may write your own guarantee.

Write for 1915 catalog; now ready. Ask us about the exclusive feature of individuality for your own car.

The Winton Motor Car Company, 122 Berea Road, Cleveland, Ohio, U. S. A.
Direct Factory Branch Houses in 20 Leading Automobile Centers.





The Comradeship of "Bull" Durham

There is something about ripe, mellow "Bull" Durham Tobacco that appeals to clean-cut manhood the world over.

Wherever in the world two "Bull" Durham smokers meet—in a hotel lobby or club in Europe or America; at cross-trails in the Klondike; in some far-off seaport on the Pacific—each recognizes in the other a *man* to his own liking, a *comrade* in the world-wide brotherhood of "the Makings." A sack of "Bull" is a letter of introduction that will win friends in every part of the globe.

GENUINE "BULL" DURHAM SMOKING TOBACCO

(Enough for forty hand-made cigarettes in each 5-cent sack)

Millions of experienced smokers find the cigarettes they roll for themselves from pure, ripe "Bull" Durham tobacco *better suited to their taste* and more satisfactory than any they buy ready-made. The rich, fresh fragrance and smooth, mellow flavor of "Bull" Durham hand-made cigarettes afford healthful enjoyment and lasting satisfaction. Get the "Makings" today and learn to "roll your own."

Ask for *FREE*
book of "papers"
with each 5c sack



FREE An illustrated booklet showing how to "Roll Your Own," and a book of cigarette papers, will both be mailed *free*, to any address in United States on postal request.

THE AMERICAN TOBACCO CO.
Address inquiry for free Booklet to "Bull"
Durham, Durham, N. C., Room 1126.



You can get one of these exceptional cameras for as little as \$5.00

They are marvels of compactness, slipping easily into a lady's hand-bag or even a boy's pocket. They are the simplest of all cameras to load and operate, and they make good size pictures of the very first quality.

Premoette Jr. No. 1, \$5.00



Weighs only 12 ounces and makes pictures $2\frac{1}{4} \times 3\frac{3}{4}$ inches in size. Fitted with Kodak Ball Bearing shutter, working for time, bulb and snap shot exposures. The lens is a meniscus achromatic of the very first quality, each one rigidly tested. The camera loads in daylight with the Premo Film Pack of 12 exposures, it is attractively finished and covered with genuine grain leather. It is amply efficient for all amateur photographic work under ordinarily favorable conditions.

The Premoette Jr. No. 1A, similar to the above in every respect, but making $2\frac{1}{2} \times 4\frac{1}{4}$ pictures, is supplied for \$8.00.

Premoette Jr. Special, \$36.00



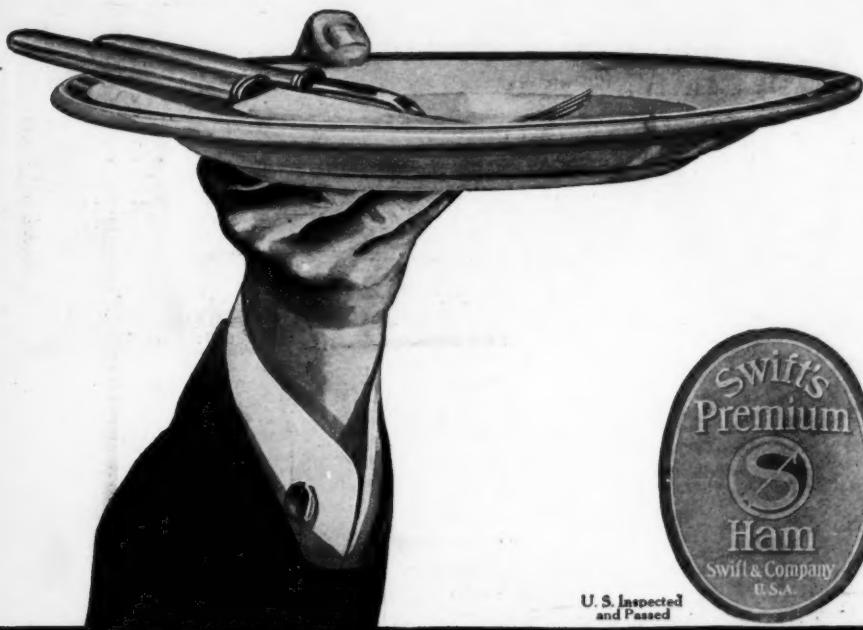
As compact, simple and convenient as the regular Premoette Jr., the Special offers the very highest degree of photographic efficiency. It is fitted with Compound shutter, attaining a maximum speed of $\frac{1}{60}$ second, and the Zeiss Kodak Anastigmat lens, f.6.3. This equipment places the camera on a par, in capabilities, with the largest, most expensive cameras made.

In keeping with its quality the camera is finished in the richest possible manner.

The Premoette Jr. No. 1A Special, similar to the above, but making $2\frac{1}{2} \times 4\frac{1}{4}$ pictures, is furnished for \$41.00.

These cameras and many other Premos, ranging in price from \$1.50 to \$150.00, are thoroughly described in the Premo catalogue. Get a copy to-day from your dealer, or write us direct. It's free.

Rochester Optical Division, Eastman Kodak Company, Rochester, N. Y.



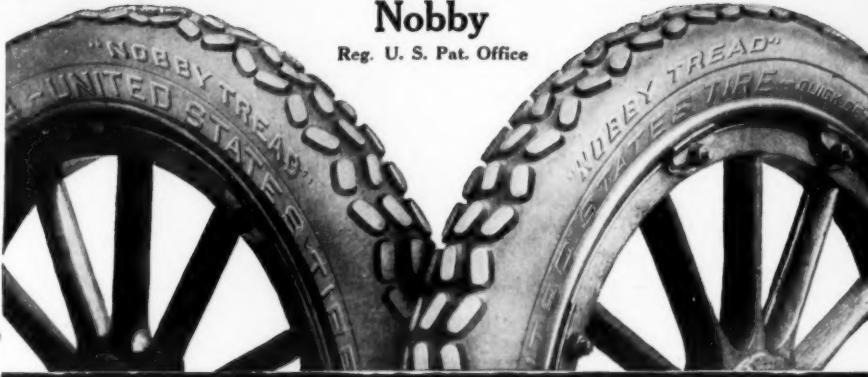
They all come back
for more when it's
**"Swift's
Premium"**
Ham or Bacon

with
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Nobby

Reg. U. S. Pat. Office

Study the "Nobs"

their angles—
their height—
their thickness—
their toughness—
their resiliency—

and their self-evident reasons why you'll find

Punctures 90% Less

with "Nobbies" than the average tires. The "Nobs" speak for themselves. You don't need to be a tire expert to understand why "Nobby Tread" Tires are the largest selling high-grade anti-skid tires in the world.

The "Nobs" explain it—together with the extra strong tire underneath and the superb quality and construction throughout.

These are the reasons for the history-making mileage records of "Nobby Tread" Tires, based on which

"Nobby Tread" Tires

are now sold under our regular warranty—perfect workmanship and material—
BUT any adjustments are on a basis of

5,000 Miles

Thousands upon thousands of veteran motorists now use "Nobby Tread" Tires on their front and rear wheels through all seasons, because they are such phenomenal mileage tires and real anti-skid tires.

United States Tire Company



DO NOT BE TALKED INTO A SUBSTITUTE—Your own dealer or any reliable dealer can supply you with "Nobby Tread" Tires. If he has no stock on hand, insist that he get them for you at once—or go to another dealer.

NOTE THIS:—Dealers who sell UNITED STATES TIRES sell the best of everything.



From photograph of Camel Train bearing provisions from Bourke, New South Wales, to the arid lands of central Australia.

The Stern Test of Food Value

comes when conditions call for the most nutrition in the most compact form.

Grape-Nuts food has a condensed strength unequalled, and it keeps indefinitely. A camel can pack enough of this delicious, easily digested food to keep a small army well-fed for weeks.

It is quality that makes this possible.

Millions, at home and abroad, use

Grape=Nuts

"There's a Reason"